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ABSTRACT

This report presents innovative vocational training (VT) initiatives to improve integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labor market. Chapter 1 describes study structure and methodology. Chapter 2 addresses the theoretical basis for observing innovations. It analyzes the definition and significance of innovation in system theory and VT; examines the practical definition of innovation and explains differences between good practice and best practice innovation; presents the innovation typology and its significance as an instrument of observation for identifying and evaluating innovations; and introduces the European Commission's definition of lifelong learning and assessment of its relevance for analyzing innovations for integrating the low-skilled. Chapter 3 analyzes innovative case studies with practical relevance for integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labor market in these six European countries: Spain, Greece, Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, and Liechtenstein. Case analysis is divided into three thematic areas: program/project development and its objectives; innovative elements of the project/program; and the initiative's implementation and transfer potential. Chapter 4 summarizes the most important innovations identified and analyzes to what extent and under which circumstances transfer of these innovative practices to other EU states and candidates would be possible. (Contains 72 references) (YLB)

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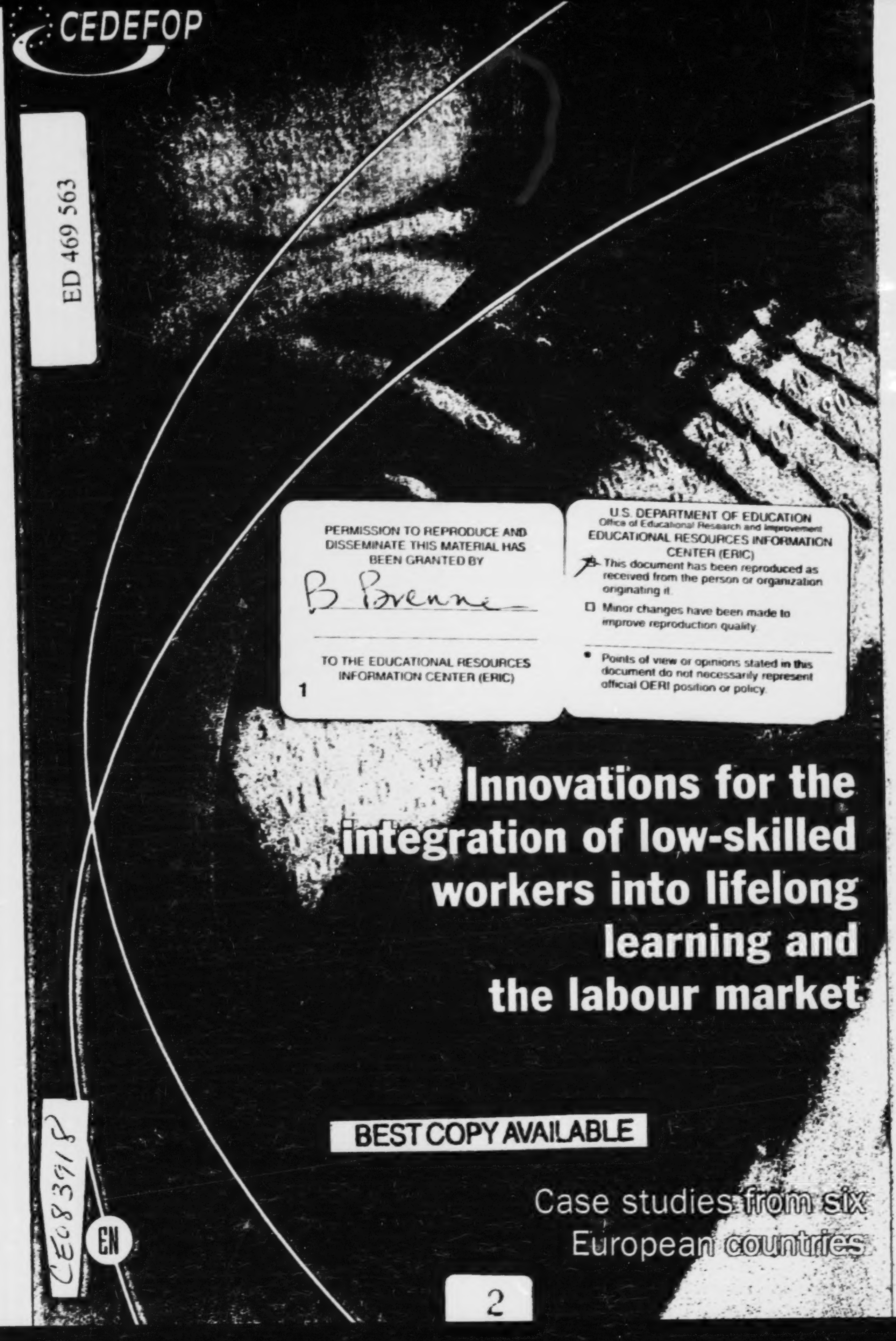

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Innovations for the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market

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Case studies from six European countries

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Innovations for the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market

Case studies from six European countries

Roland Loos

Cedefop Reference series; 33

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and training. We provide information on and analyses of vocational education
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Synthesis report on the Cedefop projects
'The Low-Skilled' and 'Innovations in Vocational Training'

Published under the responsibility of:
Johan van Rens, *Director*
Stavros Stavrou, *Deputy Director*

Foreword

Identifying and analysing innovative approaches and practices for integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market is an important challenge from employment, social and educational policy perspectives, because of this group's manifold disadvantages.

The European Commission's lifelong learning Memorandum emphasises that all citizens of the European Union should have access to lifelong learning, and that the integration of groups with limited lifelong learning opportunities, such as the low-skilled, is a top priority for EU educational policy. In the Memorandum and its follow-up document, *'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality'*, the Commission explains that innovative teaching and learning methods have to be developed to integrate those with learning difficulties.

In its 2000 work programme, Cedefop assisted the European Commission in analysing and disseminating innovative vocational training practices in Europe through the *'Observation of Innovations in Vocational Training'* and *'The Low-Skilled'* projects. Cedefop continued this work in 2001 with the project *'Identifying and Analysing Innovations and Best Practices'*. The investigation focuses on selected regional and national model initiatives and European projects and partnerships with high innovation potential.

This synthesis report presents innovative vocational training initiatives to improve the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market and analyses their transferability to other regions and countries and the entire European Union. Six European nations were chosen for analysis. They included five Member States: Greece, Spain, Austria, Denmark and Luxembourg, and the EFTA state of Liechtenstein. This selection was based on the strategy of comparing northern and central European countries with Mediterranean nations. Furthermore, smaller European states, often somewhat neglected in Cedefop national comparison studies, were to be included. This applies to Luxembourg and particularly to Liechtenstein.

As part of these Cedefop projects Pilar Lucio Carrasco conducted the Spanish national study, and Valter Fissamber of Fissamber & Associates reported on the situation in Greece. Nadja Bergmann carried out the Austrian study, Christian Gary researched the situation in Luxembourg and Alex Belschan reported on Liechtenstein. All three experts are members of ÖIBF. Information on EURO-BAC, the Leonardo da Vinci project developing and implementing a European version of the vocational proficiency examination in

Austria and Liechtenstein, was taken from a report by Susanne Klimmer of IBW.

These contributions, Cedefop's own studies (particularly those on the theoretical principles for the observation and evaluation of innovations, and the national report on the integration of low-skilled workers in Denmark), and other telephone, literature and Internet research provided the basic content of this synthesis report.

The results of the Cedefop colloquium '*VET Innovation and Best Practices - Facilitating Lifelong Learning for Lower-Skilled Workers and Skilled Workers in Occupations at Risk*' have also been incorporated. The colloquium, attended by vocational training experts from eight Member States, was held at Cedefop on 11 May 2001.

The innovative approaches and best practice models referred to in this report are primarily intended to promote the integration of low-skilled young people. However, innovative practices for the integration of low-skilled workers in other age groups were also identified and evaluated.

Furthermore, this synthesis report examines low-skilled target group segments affected by exclusion from lifelong learning even more severely than the others, who lifelong learning measures have totally ignored or neglected in studies until now. These include compulsory-school dropouts, the physically disabled and the socially marginalised in isolated, economically deprived areas. Case studies of the latter feature rural areas of Spain and isolated localities on Greek islands.

This publication is intended to assist decision-makers at European, national and regional levels when implementing innovative vocational training programmes, by providing them with up-to-date, subject-specific information and practice-oriented recommendations.

Vocational training researchers working in this area will also find up-to-date information and ideas in this report. These will assist them in their academic research into programmes to improve the integration of low-skilled workers into European labour markets and lifelong learning.

Roland Loos
Project Coordinator

Stavros Stavrou
Deputy Director

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Chapter 1: Structure and methodology of the study

The following chapter addresses the theoretical basis for observing innovations. First it analyses the **definition and significance of innovation** from the point of view of system theory, and within vocational training. It then examines the **practical** and **application-oriented definition of innovation** in more detail and explains the differences between *good practice* and *best practice* innovations. It goes on to present the **innovation typology** developed by Cedefop and expound its significance as an instrument of observation for systematically identifying and evaluating innovations. Within that context it discusses the **basic elements of vocational training innovations** and their relationship to the target group of low-skilled workers.

The next section considers how to define further subsections within the target group and which **target group categories** are particularly relevant to Cedefop's work.

This is followed by an introduction to the European Commission's definition of lifelong learning and an assessment of its relevance for analysing innovations for integrating the low-skilled.

Chapter 3 analyses selected **innovative case studies with practical relevance** for integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market in six European countries (the five Member States of Spain, Greece, Austria, Denmark and Luxembourg, and the EFTA state of Liechtenstein).

The application-oriented definition of innovation formed **the selection criterion for the case studies** described in Chapter 2. In addition, the case studies reviewed had to have facilitated or fostered **lasting integration** into lifelong learning processes and cycles and the labour market. The relevance of the innovations discussed for the six key messages of the European Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and subsequent documents was a further selection consideration. (1)

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(1) c.f. in particular the European Commission *lifelong learning Communication Document*, *'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality'*, to which Cedefop also contributed extensive evaluations.

The first three key messages in particular (1. *'New basic skills for all'*, 2. *'More investment in human resources'* and 3. *'Innovation in teaching and learning methods'*) constituted additional selection criteria. (²) To a lesser extent, Key Message 6 (*'Bringing learning closer to home / New learning environments'*) also influenced the selection of case studies.

Presentation of specimen cases follows a common general structure, although country and project-specific characteristics have been taken into account. The analysis of the specimen cases is divided into three separate thematic areas, each of which is discussed under its own subheading. The first section focuses on the **programme or project development** and its **objectives**. The next part describes the **innovative elements of the project** or **programme**. Finally, the initiative's **implementation and transfer potential** are evaluated.

Three cases each are analysed from ***Spain***, ***Greece*** and ***Austria***. A highly innovative case has been chosen from ***Denmark***, along with *several other examples at local level*. Only one relevant innovative case study for this target group could be found in ***Luxembourg***. This is mainly due to the country's size and relatively good social integration of low-skilled workers. For ***Liechtenstein*** one local innovation and the general innovation potential are identified and briefly outlined. However, the state's diminutive geography necessitated a somewhat different approach. The main focus moves away from a detailed representation of individual cases in favour of outlining and assessing the conditions for innovative developments in vocational training.

All the case studies from Spain, Greece, Austria, Denmark and Luxembourg are **model initiatives in the Member States concerned**. At the same time they provide good examples for many other Member States and candidate countries.

The local innovations and innovation potential in Liechtenstein described here are certainly highly significant for the state itself. However, they are less suitable for transfer and therefore less relevant to other national vocational training systems than the other cases featured in this study.

The analysis of Liechtenstein can, however, be classified in a different way, as an admittedly small but valuable contribution to innovation research, because it shows the **innovation development and potential** of a small, partly **autonomous, vocational training system** at regional level and in a **transregional**, **transnational** and **European context**.

The concluding chapter summarises the most important innovations identified in the six countries. It then proceeds to analyse to what extent

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(²) The Memorandum's key messages are formulated too broadly and generally to be regarded as *analysis criteria*. They are postulates for creating a Learning Society in which (ideally) all are integrated into lifelong learning. However, they can sensibly be used as additional *selection criteria*, as they define *basic innovation characteristics/requirements in the context of lifelong learning*.

and under which conditions **transfer** of these innovative practices to **other EU states** and **EU candidates** would be possible.

The results of the Cedefop projects *'The Low-Skilled'* and *'Observation of Innovations in Vocational Training'* are the primary data for this report. The projects were conducted as part of Cedefop's 2000 work programme. Data collected by the current Cedefop project, *'Identifying Innovations and Best Practices'*, have also been incorporated.

Cedefop's synthesis report aims to provide an overview of current innovative best practice models for integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour markets of the six European countries concerned. The main goal of this study is to assess **innovations with regard to their applicability** in their respective local, regional and national contexts.

Vocational training researchers and educational policymakers should thus have access to relevant, up-to-date information on the latest innovative practices and models. The practice-oriented ideas and recommendations are designed to assist educational policymakers in the decision-making process and to promote the implementation of innovative vocational training practices at local, regional, national and Community level.

Chapter 2: Definition and typology of innovation

2.1 Definition of innovation in system theory and vocational education and training

In Talcott Parsons' classic system theory, action systems have four fundamental functions: *pattern maintenance*, *integration*, *goal attainment* and *adaptation*. In developed societies these four functions are further divided into specialised subsystems to increase the capacity of social systems to adapt to new system environments (Parsons, T. 1975).

In system theory – and in particular according to more recent system theory approaches – innovation can be defined as the product of the system's reactions to the changing influences of the system environment. Social systems react to system-external influences by continually adapting their internal structural segments to the new requirements. This is designed to guarantee the continued existence of the system as a whole (Willke, H., 1993).

Through this restructuring and reorganisation, new innovative structures and products are configured from existing elements, thus maintaining or improving the efficiency of the system functions. However, only social systems are capable of taking stock of themselves, of conscious reflection on and evaluation of their own actions, and therefore of producing innovations. Only the self-awareness and structural intelligence of social systems make it possible to develop new, original, purpose-designed products and structures from existing elements (Loos, R., 1994).

The term 'innovation', as used in system theories, is relevant to vocational training in as much as it emphasises the process of adapting system-internal structures to changed system-external conditions. Innovations in vocational training systems should be understood as 'successful' reactions to changes in those systems which surround the education and training system or are closely connected to it. This applies in particular to business and the labour market.

Innovative VET practices which lead to improvements in vocational training in a particular occupational branch or sector in one country would not necessarily have the same positive effect within another national VET system. Before transferring innovations one must analyse the framework conditions determining the efficiency of new vocational training initiatives. The specific economic, legal and social structures of other Member States must be assessed to establish whether similarly successful implementation would be possible there (Loos, R., 2000c).

The European Commission's *Green Paper on Innovation* gives two senses of the term innovation which affect its evaluation:

- the innovation process
- the result of the innovation

In the first sense, the emphasis is on the process leading to an innovation. Form and organisation of the process are analysed to establish whether they are new and efficient. In the second sense, the product of the innovation and its concrete effects are the subject of the analysis.

A comprehensive efficiency evaluation of the transfer of innovative vocational training practices to other Member States or EU candidate countries should include both dimensions (Geers, F., 1998).

2.2 Practical definition of innovation, *good practices* and *best practices*

VET innovations are seldom radically new ideas, models or practices. More often they are a restructuring of existing, familiar (and in some cases unfamiliar) elements. An innovation does not have to contain completely new elements. **Combining familiar (or familiar and unfamiliar) elements to form a new practice or model** is the essence of innovation in vocational training (Geers, F., 1998).

We should also note that in many cases those elements of an innovation which are already familiar (e.g. ideas, models) may not have been (widely) applied previously.

It follows that three categories of elements can be distinguished, the combination of which leads to the development of an innovation:

- familiar elements already applied in VET
- familiar elements not yet (widely) applied in VET
- completely new elements

An innovation does not, however, necessarily consist of a combination of elements from all three categories (Loos, R., 2001c).

The proportion of familiar elements in an innovation is not the determining variable for the evaluation of efficiency. An innovation consisting 'merely' of restructuring exclusively familiar elements may well still be extremely efficient, if this new combination in itself is highly practical in its design (Geers, F., 1998).

The new product must also be a relevant novel feature in vocational training practice if it is to be **recognised as a real and applicable innovation** within the context of this approach. In the case of European projects such as the Leonardo da Vinci programmes, which are innovative by definition (the European Commission also defines the Leonardo da Vinci programme as a *laboratory for the development of VET innovations*), the products and approaches should be analysed strictly with regard to their practicality and ease of implementation (Loos, R., 2000c).

The classification of innovative vocational training approaches as basic types (Dietzen, A., 1998) or in a typology matrix (cf. Walter, R., 1998) has proved useful for this purpose.

The concept of ***good practice*** is often equated with innovation. Under the application-based definition set out here, this may not always be the case. In VET, *good practice* is generally used to describe a new practice which provides vocational education and training in an efficient form. However, this definition does not completely clarify whether the approach is new only in a particular, local environment or really represents a *new combination of elements*. As defined in this Cedefop project, the term innovation is only applied when a practice represents a sustainable new approach or model at least at **regional** or **national level** (within a region or a Member State) (Loos, R., 2001c).

The term ***best practice***, on the other hand, can be equated with innovation to a considerable extent, especially using an application-based definition relevant to VET practice. This is particularly true because the term implies a high degree of efficiency for the relevant procedure or model (Loos, R., 2001d), even if - in contrast to innovation - the *novelty* aspect is not prominent enough (Geers, F., 1998).

2.3 Typology of innovations

Several variables and categories must be taken into account when classifying vocational training innovations in a typology (3). One important variable is ***the evolution of the innovation***, which represents its chronological dimension (course of development). Basically, three phases of evolution can be distinguished for all VET innovations (Geers, F., 1998):

*(1) the **process** and the conditions leading to the innovation*

*(2) the innovation's **current stage of development** and the scope of its effect on vocational training*

*(3) conditions for (further) **implementation** and **transfer** of the innovation*

---

(3) *Categories* are the various expressions of a *variable*. In this approach the *variables* are defined as the generic dimension and *categories* as sub-classifications of the variables. See also the example on the following page.

Further important variables are the players involved, learning and training content, methods of teaching and training (formal and informal), and the target groups. Under the variable *players in VET* various categories are defined (European, national, regional and sectoral levels. A further distinction is made at all levels between innovations by the relevant offices/authorities and by the social partners). The *target groups* variable is also divided into *categories* at all levels. Further differentiation of the target groups into segments is discussed later in this chapter (Loos, R., 2001b).

The following pages contain tables showing the classification of types of innovation in accordance with the variables and categories described.

Typology of innovations

Matrix of players		
	specific target group(s) target group segments	players (divided into *authorities* and *social partners*)
PROCESS LEADING TO INNOVATION supporting/ inhibiting factors	e.g. low-skilled or older employees	European level
		national level
		regional level
		local level
		sectoral level
CURRENT INNOVATION		
TRANSFER OF INNOVATION/ TRANSFER MECHANISMS / IMPLEMENTATION supporting/ inhibiting factors		European level
		national level
		regional level
		local level
		sectoral level

A table in the form of a matrix shows **the three evolutionary phases of the innovation** on the *horizontal axis*, whilst the other variables and categories are placed on the *vertical axis*. This makes it possible to *screen innovations* and their various types systematically in electronic databases on the basis of these and other variables (Loos, R., 2001c). (4)

Typology of innovations

Matrix of VET methods/content/strategies			
	VET methods	VET content	VET strategies
PROCESS LEADING TO INNOVATION supporting/ inhibiting factors			
CURRENT INNOVATION			
TRANSFER OF INNOVATION/ TRANSFER MECHANISMS / IMPLEMENTATION supporting/ inhibiting factors			

The different variables and categories of innovation can also be defined as **elements** in the process from **decision-making** on the part of the players up to its **implementation** and **concrete effects on the specific target groups** (e.g. improving qualifications, increasing learning motivation). This broad framework can be regarded as **an additional perspective** in the systematic observation of innovations to enhance the two-dimensional matrix representation, facilitating the understanding of innovation, its various forms and its mode of action within the overall context (Loos, R., 2001d).

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(4) Clicking on the relevant fields of the matrix opens windows with further data or information from the e-databases.

This approach emphasises the **focus on the target group**. Various types of innovation can be made more clearly visible using the elements listed, especially in their relation to the target group of the low-skilled.

Motivating low-skilled workers to learn is fundamental to their **long-term integration into the process and cycles of lifelong learning**. This approach is also appropriate for representing and evaluating learning motivation in context and in relation to the other elements (Loos, R., 2001c). (5)

The following is a graphic representation of the above.

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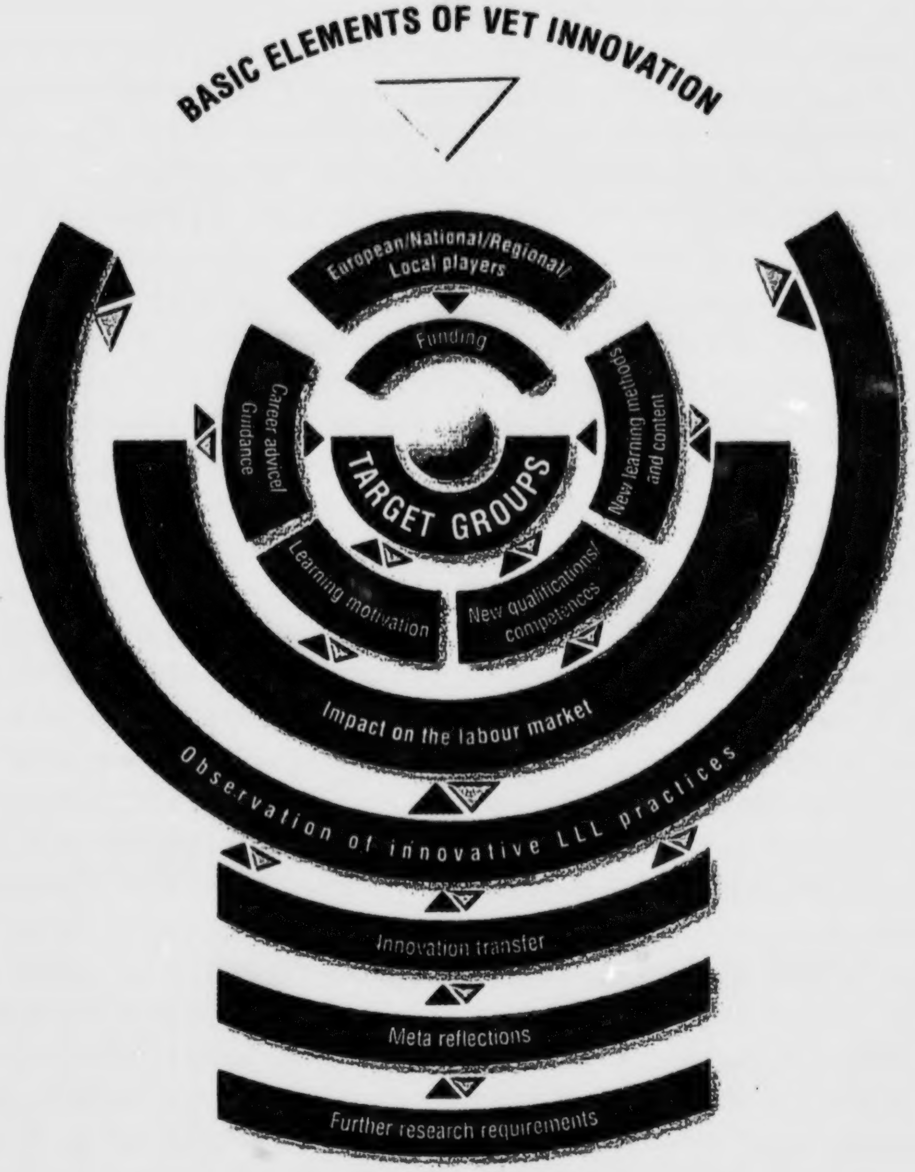
(5) The significance of learning motivation (shown as a separate element in this diagram) is demonstrated by the case studies in Chapter 3.


BASIC ELEMENTS OF VET INNOVATION
European/National/Regional/ Local players
Funding
Career advice/ Guidance
New learning methods and content
TARGET GROUPS
Learning motivation
New qualifications/ competences
Impact on the labour market
Observation of innovative LLL practices
Innovation transfer
Meta reflections
Further research requirements

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Low-skilled workers are those who have, **at most, successfully completed compulsory schooling** or an **apprenticeship**. A further differentiation of the low-skilled workers target group into various **segments** will facilitate assessment and understanding of the innovations presented in the following chapter.

This target group can be divided into segments in different ways. The following matrix takes into account all the fundamental patterns of differentiation (Loos, R., 2001c) (6):

General differentiation:

- workers
- unemployed people

Gender-specific differentiation:

- men
- women

Age differentiation:

- (20 and under)
- young workers/unemployed (20 - 30)
- workers/unemployed in the middle age range (30 - 45)
- older workers/unemployed (45 and over)

If necessary the other target groups can be differentiated further according to age. (7)

Inclusion of **specific groups** (e.g. those without access to lifelong learning or social groups particularly vulnerable to occupational and social marginalisation):

- physically disabled people
- immigrants
- ethnic minorities
- others

Qualification-level differentiation:

- completed compulsory schooling
- compulsory schooling not completed
- completed special schooling
- unskilled/semiskilled
- other (8)

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(6) The Cedefop Colloquium *VET Innovations and Best Practices - Facilitating lifelong learning for Low-Skilled Workers and Skilled Workers in Occupations at Risk* (Cedefop, 11 May 2001) identified and evaluated various target group segments relevant to Cedefop analyses to which Cedefop should give special consideration in the next stages of the project. The matrix shown takes account of proposals and conclusions from the Colloquium discussions.

(7) For young people, in particular, this has proven useful for the target group segments *compulsory education pupils with learning difficulties*, *compulsory education dropouts*, *those seeking apprenticeships*, *semiskilled/unskilled workers* and *pupils completing special-needs schools*.

(8) These include dropouts from apprenticeships and technical schools, for example.

These target group segments can each be divided into the following two groups:

- participation in occupationally relevant continuing training schemes
- no previous participation in occupationally relevant continuing training schemes

Differentiation according to sector/occupation:

- production sector (blue-collar workers)
- service sector (white-collar workers)

If desired, **various sectors, occupational groups or occupations** can be divided further. However, they should be limited to target group segments relevant to the investigation in hand.

In addition, the **locality of the continuing training initiatives** must be taken into account.

- in-house
- outside the company (9)

Geographical factors can also encourage or even determine social marginalisation and lack of access to lifelong learning. The following fundamental factors should be included: (10)

- urban areas (cities)
- rural areas (in particular isolated/economically underdeveloped rural areas)

The analysis of case studies in the following chapters broadly respected the variables of innovation typology and the basic elements of innovation. However, we decided not to systematically list the various types of innovation in matrix form or to differentiate according to target group segments in this publication, since the number of cases studied is too small for this purpose.

The primary aim of this research report is to demonstrate the **efficiency of application-oriented innovations for vocational training practice**, using a limited number of selected, highly innovative case studies, taking as the frame of reference the target group of low-skilled workers.

However, on the basis of the approach presented here, systematic cataloguing of identified innovations as matrix files in an electronic database is planned for the year 2002 as part of the Cedefop *Reporting System on Lifelong Learning*.

In a second step, the relevance of the identified innovations will be grouped in clusters according to the **six key messages of the European Commission's lifelong learning Memorandum** - a) *New basic skills for all,*

---

(9) A distinction should also be made here between *school, training workshop, home, further training centre, etc.*

(10) Some of the innovative case studies discussed in Chapter 3 relate to low-skilled workers in *isolated rural areas* (economically underdeveloped rural regions in Spain and isolated local areas on Greek islands).

b) *More investment in human resources,* c) *Innovation in teaching and learning,* d) *Valuing learning,* e) *Rethinking guidance and counselling* and f) *Bringing learning closer to home* – using virtual tools. (11)

It is intended to systematically identify innovative measures across the EU for various target group segments of low-skilled workers. In particular, in-house continuing training measures for older lower-skilled employees (with the focus on blue-collar workers) and VET initiatives for the integration of the physically disabled in lifelong learning and in the labour market will be the subjects of the Social Integration e-database of the Cedefop *lifelong learning Reporting System* in 2002.

2.4 Definition of lifelong learning and its significance for observing innovations for the integration of low-skilled workers

In the debate on lifelong learning in the European Union, lifelong learning is regarded as a holistic approach to learning which includes **all learning processes**, from pre-school education to continuing training for retired people.

The European Commission defines lifelong learning as *'all learning activity undertaken throughout the entire life span which improves knowledge, skills and competence and/or promotes personal fulfilment, whether related to employment or to a wider civic, social and cultural perspective.'*

This definition emphasises the relevance of lifelong learning to the *world of work* and *private life* (albeit in a somewhat generalised form). (12)

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(11) The content of some of the Memorandum's key messages is related to the typology of innovation. However, the formulation of the key messages is considerably broader and couched in more general terms than the variables and categories of the innovation typology. Cf. footnote in Chapter 2.

(12) European Commission, *lifelong learning Communication Document* 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality', following up the lifelong learning Memorandum.
In previous documents the Commission defined lifelong learning as *'all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence'*. The difference between the two definitions of lifelong learning and the comments on definition in the consultation process between the Commission and the Member States will not be discussed further here, nor will Cedefop debate on the subject, as this goes beyond the terms of reference of a methodological introduction to this volume. It should, however, be noted that the later version of the lifelong learning definition used in the main body of the text emphasises the aspect of *active citizenship*.

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Therefore lifelong learning not only includes vocational education and training but also any other kind of educational programme. It focuses on the added value of learning, not only for one's career but also for one's private life. lifelong learning is regarded as the 'motor' which powers an individual's **career** (especially in view of the ever-accelerating changes in skills requirements in the labour market) and produces aware and **active citizens**.

Teaching **personality development** and **social competence** is fundamentally important in this context. In the consultation process on the *lifelong learning Memorandum* the Member States deemed that *'personal development'* and *'social participation'*, *'political education'*, *'the capacity for transcultural communication'* and *'learning competence'* were essential.

It is a fundamental objective of lifelong learning approaches to make individuals aware that lifelong learning is a crucial factor in both their working and private life. Inspiring **motivation for learning** and teaching **learning competence** (acquiring learning techniques appropriate to the individual or target group) are therefore essential elements of lifelong learning strategies. They should ensure integration into lifelong learning processes and cycles as far as possible.

In identifying and assessing innovative practices for the integration of **groups without access to lifelong learning**, such as low-skilled workers, *motivation* and *learning competence* should be given special consideration, since this problem group can only be integrated with the help of innovative approaches and models. In addition to vocational knowledge and skills, they should impart learning motivation and competence effectively.

Chapter 3: Innovative practices for integrating low-skilled workers with reference to selected case studies

Spain

Case 1: The 'Taller de Empleo'

Programme development and objectives

In 2000 the Spanish Ministry of Employment introduced the ***taller de empleo*** (employment workshop), (13) a new national scheme aiming to (re)integrate low-skilled, unemployed people into the labour market and lifelong learning. The *taller de empleo* encourages participants to acquire new qualifications and skills and, moreover, motivates them to learn. This scheme is the first of its kind to target Spain's middle-aged and older low-skilled population.

The *talleres de empleo* are a newly designed variation on the *escuelas de taller* (workshop schools). However, a range of innovative elements distinguishes the former from the latter. Whereas workshop school attendance is restricted to unemployed under-25s, the new scheme offers **low-skilled, unemployed over-25s the chance to (re)acquaint themselves with learning processes and the labour market** (Carrasco, P., 2001).

The *escuelas de taller* enable socially marginalised, unemployed younger people and those at risk of social exclusion to gain a foothold in the workforce and society. However, the lack of motivation among young people is a central problem in the workshop schools. Yet even relatively efficient *escuelas de taller* do not match the skills teaching and learning motivation standards attained by the innovative Danish production schools, which are role models for other Member States (Loos, R., 2000b).

Training and employment interact closely in the *talleres de empleo*. Participants complete training modules and work experience. **This is**

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(13) The *taller de empleo* arose from the *Real Decreto* 282/1999 and the B.O.E. (Boletín Oficial del Estado) of 23 February 1999.

designed to facilitate their integration into the world of work and the labour market as employees or as self-employed persons in small business sector occupations (Ministerio de Trabajo, 1999).

The project lasts between six months and one year. The qualifications obtained through completion of the *talleres de empleo* are compatible with those acquired via a corresponding valid training course in the relevant occupation or sector. A project plan for recording the content and timetable of workshop activities, work experience and lessons is drawn up for the duration of the *taller*.

Innovative elements of the programme

The main innovative aspects of the *taller de empleo* are its **project and motivation-oriented learning concept** and its **target group of low-skilled, unemployed over-25s.** Until now these people had no opportunity to participate in a scheme of this type. The fact that a not insignificant proportion of participants in the *talleres de empleo* are over 40 years old indicates that this initiative is particularly important for **older low-skilled workers**.

Furthermore, the scheme is characterised by the fact that national, regional and local institutions, both public and private, **work hand in hand.**

During the *taller de empleo* participants are employed by the institution implementing the scheme and receive remuneration amounting to 150% of the minimum wage for the entire duration of the *taller*..

Guidance and **support** are available to participants throughout the *taller de empleo*. This focuses on the communication of **practical working procedures** and related **theoretical knowledge**, and the acquisition of business skills. Constant tutor supervision adapted to participants' individual needs increases their **motivation to learn**.

The following table shows the most important differences between this new Spanish Ministry of Employment initiative and traditional Spanish workshop schools (Carrasco, P., 2001).

	Taller de Empleo	**Escuela de Taller**
Duration	6 months minimum / 1 year maximum	2 years
Age group	(long-term) unemployed over-25s	(long-term) unemployed under-25s
Remuneration	150% of the Spanish minimum wage throughout the entire training period	Minimum wage throughout working period During the training period participants only receive a grant
Percentage of theoretical teaching	25 % of working time	50% of working time

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The *talleres de empleo* can be considered more efficient than the *escuelas de taller* for several reasons. Most significantly, **participants' motivation to learn is considerably greater** in the *talleres de empleo*. The higher age of participants could explain this to some extent. Participants cooperate better with tutors and approach the communication of training content more seriously. Monthly payment of a wage during the entire *taller* and entitlement to unemployment benefit on completion of the *taller* if work is not found immediately further increase the *taller de empleo*'s attraction for participants and have a positive effect on learning motivation and active cooperation.

However, (ideally permanent) labour market integration of *taller* graduates is proving to be almost as problematic as placing workshop school participants. **Self-employment in small or medium-sized companies is one alternative** for many graduates.

The fact that the project providers have to run the *taller* without profit impedes interaction with private enterprises and integration of *taller* graduates into the private sector. The communities themselves are in a position to employ only a small number of the project participants.

More intensive private enterprise commitment to implementing *talleres de empleo*, in cooperation with public institutions and in accordance with the project objectives, would improve the current situation.

Taller de empleo teaching of business skills and related knowledge demonstrates clear deficiencies, despite its particular focus on this area. More rigorous communication of these skills would considerably improve the effectiveness of the *taller de empleo* scheme by engendering self-employment in new small and medium-sized businesses, for example (Carrasco, P., 2001).

Case 2: The PRODYOUTH project

Project development and objectives

This project was implemented by the Columbares association (14) in the province of Murcia between 1998 and 2000. PRODYOUTH's target group was low-skilled young people threatened with social marginalisation. (15)

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(14) Columbares is a local Murcian association active in continuing training and social work. It has many years of experience in implementing projects.

(15) The project was implemented in the Beniaján region in the province of Murcia. Apart from seasonal work in the agricultural sector, this rural area offers few employment perspectives for low-skilled workers.

This initiative focused on the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills in biological agriculture, conservation and rural tourism. One of the most important aspects was the communication of information on *new technologies in relation to agriculture* and their application in practice. A campsite was also set up according to ecological principles (Carrasco, P., 2001).

After a preparatory phase, teaching of course content and skills took place in a specially formed *production school* based on the Danish model (Loos, R., 2000a). [16]

Phases 1 and 2 map the project's progress. Phase 3 represents the planned implementation at local level after conclusion of the project.

- Phase 1 – Communication of basic skills in three modules
- Phase 2 – Creation of the Círculo Natural production school as a simulated company
- Phase 3 – Continuation of the production school as an actual company [17]

Work and knowledge and skills teaching in the Círculo Natural production school was structured in three *outlines*. [18]

- **A – New technologies in agriculture and horticulture**
- **B – Elimination of ecological damage and local recycling**

- Development of a campsite according to ecological criteria
- Elimination of environmental damage / clean-up of the surrounding area
- (Re)forestation of campsite vicinity
- Establishment of a recycling system for all campsite waste
- Design and planting of an ecological garden

- **C – Eco-tourism and improving environmental awareness**

- Analysis of the environmental conditions in the campsite area
- Planning of leisure and tourist activities
- Production of printed material and brochures on environmental protection and local eco-tourism (e.g. local maps with walks, leaflets on campsite services)
- Local information and advertising campaigns

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[16] Numerous production schools (Produktionsskole) were established in Denmark to promote the integration of unemployed, low-skilled young people into the labour market. The production school work and training concept is portrayed in detail in the chapter on Denmark.

[17] The following describes the environment necessary for implementing Phase 3.

[18] The chapter on Denmark focuses on the structuring of the work-oriented production school classes into *outlines* and how they differ from traditional learning and training concepts.

Teaching of learning content was closely oriented to the work process. The production school simulated company structures in the context of work organisation. Participants also had to handle internal organisation, assume responsibility for specific tasks and activities and attend regular coordination meetings (Carrasco, P., 2001).

Practical training exchanges with young people from Danish production schools and similar establishments in Germany were arranged to give participants further experience and social skills in a transnational context (Loos, R., 2000b). (19)

The pilot phase of the project was chiefly financed through the Youthstart programme. (20)

Innovative elements of the project

The main innovative features of the production school are its structure, **which combines school and workplace into a new, efficient model,** and its **alternative methods of imparting knowledge** and **professional skills** (Loos, R., 2000a).

Furthermore, the **motivation-oriented, alternative learning concept**, which aims to spark young people's interest in learning and skills-based work more rigorously than the *escuelas de taller* (workshop schools) do, (21) is a first for Spain (Loos, R., 2000b).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The project can be considered a great success, with regard to both the integration of young people into the labour market and to their motivation to learn and undertake continuing training. Most participants have since found employment. This approach seems to open the door to permanent vocational and social integration.

Long-term financial security and the legal environment in particular, which prevents Spanish schools from making a profit, stand in the way of the transfer and wider implementation of this scheme.

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(19) One example of a Danish production school structured on similar lines is Pile Mølle. This offers young people outline training in *nature and the environment* and *children and the environment*, craft outlines in wood and metalworking and a tourism outline with a strong focus on transnational teaching and training activities. Pile Mølle's training and work concept and focus are discussed in the chapter on Denmark.

(20) Asociación Columbares, Proyecto transnacional *Prodyouth; columbares@distrito.com)*

(21) Motivating the young people is a major problem for many *escuelas de taller*. Even the most efficient ones seldom match the levels of skills communication and learning motivation attained by the Danish production schools.

Spanish law prohibits the sale of products manufactured in a school. The *Círculo Natural* production school, therefore, was only allowed to run for the duration of the project (Carrasco, P., 2001).

Case 3: The JOVEM project

Project development and objectives

As the number of dropouts from Spanish compulsory schooling is strikingly high compared to the rest of Europe, steps to integrate this target group and (re)motivate its members to learn are even more important than in most other EU countries (Loos, R., 1996).

Jóvenes para el Desarollo (22) launched the pilot project *Club de Colocación* in 1996. 40% of the 50 participants subsequently found employment. In 1997 the *Club de Empleo para Extremadura* organised similar initiatives which reached more than 1000 young people. A third of these found jobs through this project.

The success of these two initiatives resulted in the launch of the JOVEM Youthstart project in the Extremadura region in 1998. It followed a similar approach.

It targets individuals between the ages of 14 and 18 who are involved in (compulsory) education or training and who are in danger of dropping out of the (compulsory) school system or training. This could lead to vocational and social exclusion. The JOVEM project's range of initiatives aims to prevent this undesirable outcome.

The JOVEM project strives to impart the **behavioural** and communication **skills**, independence and creativity young people need to assert themselves on the labour market. The project foresees skills training for this target group **in addition to normal compulsory school classes**. Teaching takes place on school premises (and is coordinated with the lesson timetable). Here pupils learn how to **develop their social skills.** They also receive specific information on various occupations and a general overview of the labour market.

Modules on **learning motivation, communication** and **teamwork and group dynamics** fall into the category of social skills development. The key components of these modules are listed below.

- Motivation: basics and various forms of motivation, discussion and reflection on individual reasons for participating in the project

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(22) 'Jóvenes para el Desarollo' is a state-run organisation.

- Communication: listening to others, articulation of feedback in the learning process, non-verbal communication as an additional form of expression
- Teamwork and group dynamics: organisation of a task force, exercises on group dynamics, creativity training, development of problem-solving skills in various (simulated) situations

After completing the training, the group undertakes **project work**. Examples include organising exhibitions and presenting tourist videos (Carrasco, P., 2001).

Innovative elements of the project

What makes this project particularly innovative is that it has provided a way to **integrate additional learning units/modules into normal compulsory secondary education** and thereby offer in-depth social skills teaching to young people threatened by social marginalisation.

One key innovative aspect is imparting learning motivation in a separate module, conceived specifically with unmotivated young people and those with learning difficulties in mind. Many pupils are (re)motivated to continue with general education and vocational training. The module **teaches** them **the purpose and advantages of lifelong learning** and **motivates** them to persevere. Implementing this kind of module revamps the school's conventional learning environment and transforms it into a **multifunctional learning zone** which conforms to lifelong learning's holistic requirements.

Incorporation of e-learning and **multimedia skills** adapted to the specific target group is a further innovative aspect of the approach.

The young people also receive relevant career information. This provides them with concrete insight into the world of work, the various vocational branches and occupations and the most important activities within the occupations.

Career information on paid employment is supplemented by alternative prospects for self-employment in the small business sector. Motivating participants to become self-employed with practice-oriented and group-specific information is another characteristic of the project.

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The project's transfer potential is extremely high. The success of the JOVEM project prompted adoption of this approach by eight training centres in the Extremadura region. Other parts of Spain have also shown considerable interest in conducting initiatives based on the JOVEM model. The regions of Catalonia and Navarra are currently working towards implementing the system (Carrasco, P., 2001).

Greece

Case 1: Pilot project ‘Local Social Capital in Archanes’

Project development and objectives

This is one of 36 European projects in the context of the European Commission Local Social Capital (LSC) initiative. (23)

The objective of the LSC projects is to support low-skilled, socially marginalised workers, as well as voluntary groups and organisations working towards the integration of this target group. The aim is to facilitate access to gainful employment for low-skilled workers.

The pilot project in Archanes (Crete) is the only European LSC initiative project to run in Greece. The Organisation for the Development of the Temenos Pediada Region (OATEP) (24) of the Iraklion prefecture in Crete is responsible for implementing this scheme. OATEP was established by 17 towns to coordinate programmes promoting economic and social development in this region. It administers and distributes the available funds. OATEP has set up an informal network of local and regional organisations and groups active in social affairs to accomplish its activities more efficiently.

Three categories of programmes/micro-projects are promoted through the LSC Archanes project.

1. Activities promoting social cohesion at local level.
2. Promotion of **local and regional networks** to encourage the integration of low-skilled or socially marginalised workers with the support of voluntary associations or informal groups.
3. Support for low-skilled individuals who are socially marginalised or threatened with social exclusion. Emphasis on integration into the labour market (as employees) is supplemented by particular attention to schemes which enable participants to embark on **self-employment in small businesses**.

OATEP selects individuals, groups and organisations eligible for support and gives them personal guidance. Counselling is provided by trained staff with adequate experience in social work. Socially marginalised people receive assistance in devising their individual project proposals. Once this has been approved, the social workers help to develop it (Fissamber, V., 2000).

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(23) European Social Fund (ESF), Article 6

(24) *Organismos Anaptixis Temenous Pediadas*

Innovative elements of the project

The innovative elements of the LSC Archanes Project can be summarised as follows:

- **The project has created a *formal* network** and organisational structure at **regional** and **local level**, which plans, obtains funding for and supervises the work of more than a hundred local programmes and micro-projects to promote the integration of low-skilled or socially marginalised workers. This is new not only for European Union LSC projects, but for all other projects promoted by the European Social Fund. Individuals and groups receive **personal guidance,** both in planning and in implementing their project. This support far exceeds the usual degree of guidance (for example, counsellors cooperate with those receiving support to draw up a plan for a self-employed small-business activity and actively help their clients to contact potential customers). In addition to ensuring **non-formal qualifications** in occupation-related knowledge through this *mentoring,* numerous local projects also provide **formal continuing training programmes specifically aimed at the target group** (in the form of short courses).
- Implementation of a programme to promote local social capital in rural areas of Greece is new in the national context. Not one of the 36 LSC projects running throughout Europe caters for this group. **ESF projects have not targeted low-skilled young villagers** and **single mothers in rural areas until now.**
- Creating ***informal* networks** fostering social cohesion at **local level** to implement integration programmes with the heavy involvement of voluntary work in economically underdeveloped rural and isolated areas (such as the hinterland of the Iraklion prefecture), is also very innovative. **No similar initiative has yet been organised within the framework of EU programmes**. Only the PEACE programme had a somewhat similar direction, but its objectives were totally different in their conception (to help promote peace between the two ethnic groups in Northern Ireland).

Target group segments of the micro-projects

The group of low-skilled workers and the socially marginalised targeted by this LSC project can be divided into the following segments:

- low-skilled, single mothers with a low level of education
- unemployed married women (with children) with no vocational training and a low family income
- low-skilled young people
- disabled people capable of integration
- foreigners of all ages living permanently in the project area

They all live in economically underdeveloped, rural areas

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

Analysis of project results to date has shown that social marginalisation in rural areas exhibits widely varying features, with regard to both the target groups and the problems and specific form of marginalisation.

Individual guidance from qualified social workers for low-skilled and socially marginalised workers is a particularly important approach in rural areas. For example, women who lead relatively isolated lives in their villages are often unaware of opportunities and concrete steps which could lead to gainful employment.

Information from this project could greatly benefit rural areas in countries applying for EU membership as well as regions with similar structures within the EU. The information gained from this initiative may be even more interesting for some candidate countries than for most EU nations, as a greater percentage of their population lives in rural areas (Fissamber, V., 2000).

Case studies from the micro-projects

The progress of micro-projects for several of the target group segments listed is reflected in the following case studies:

1. Development of a **special software product** (developer: Institute of Technology and Research at the University of Crete) for people with slight mental disabilities. Learning and mastering this e-programme should help to integrate the relevant target group into the labour market. Pupils from the local grammar school volunteer to familiarise the disabled group with this electronic tool. The disabled people acquire various **basic computer skills** useful for a future occupation (e.g. how to register café orders electronically).

2. A group of housewives living in an **economically underdeveloped, isolated rural area** (a mountain village in the province of Iraklion) attends an intensive cookery course. On completing the short period of training they contact local organisers and offer to prepare food or meals at home for local events (weddings, christenings and other celebrations) for remuneration.

3. One 45-year-old illiterate man with considerable artistic talent is provided with the necessary materials and equipment to take on commissions such as decorating local churches, guest houses and other public and private buildings. He also receives help in making contact with potential clients.

4. Organisation of cultural evenings and meals where local residents and immigrants can get to know one other better. The two groups share responsibility for the events.

Case 2: Combining continuing training with employment incentives

Programme development and objectives

This initiative ran from 1997 to 1999 as part of the Greek ESF *Operational Programme* Continuing Vocational Training and Employment Incentives 1994-99. It represents a pilot approach whose main objective was to considerably raise the employment results of continuing training for the lower-skilled unemployed.

The initiative allowed lower-skilled unemployed people to attend a training course designed with the participation of interested companies. These companies undertook to employ at least a third of the participants for at least four months once they had completed the course, and to bear the cost themselves.

At the end of the four months the companies could retain these employees for a further 12 months if they wished, and the *National Organisation for Employment* (OAED) paid part of their wages for this period. OAED and the enterprises together selected 50% of the participants for the course. The other half were chosen by OAED alone (Fissamber, V., 2000).

Implementation of this programme served the following objectives

- to create new job opportunities
- to improve enterprise competitiveness through the employment of workers with initial or continuing training
- to target continuing training at the immediate needs of the labour market

According to OAED data, 80% of the course participants who were taken on by the companies retained their jobs after the 12-month subsidised period. This is a real success, considering the difficulty in integrating this target group (OAED, 1999. Evaluation Report).

Innovative elements of the programme

Implementation of the initiative *'Combination of Continuing Training with Employment Incentives'* represents the **first** attempt in Greece **to tie continuing training programmes for unemployed people directly to employment effects** (Fissamber, V., 2000).

The **close cooperation between the public offices responsible** and **companies** is a model for initiatives in this sector. The businesses are motivated to recruit new staff by the programme's **favourable conditions** (involvement in determining training content and the opportunity to take on course participants of their choice for a further year, with OAED bearing part of the financial burden, after a four-month period of employment at the company's own expense) .

The fact that the businesses must bear the cost of employing course participants alone for the first four months, and OAED only then helps defray the cost of the wages for the new staff for the following 12 months, ensures that the enterprises have a genuine interest in their new employees (OAED, 1999. Evaluation Report).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The project design is an exemplary pilot scheme, not only for Greece, but also for other Member States and EU candidate countries. It is interesting because it considers and links the interests of public players in the labour market and private enterprise in a targeted manner. Furthermore, information gained from the internal evaluation of this initiative could serve as a basis for experience and comparison for planning authorities in other countries (Fissamber, V., 2000).

Case 3: E.P.I.L. project Employment through Promotion of Independent Life

Project development and objectives

The E.P.I.L. project, Employment through Promotion of Independent Life, was implemented as part of the EMPLOYMENT HORIZON Community initiative. Its objective was to help people with disabilities to find a job, lead an independent life and become active members of their local community.

The project was coordinated by the Dodecanese Association of Disabled People and accomplished with the following partners

- Rhodes City Council
- The University of the Aegean
- Panhellenic Union of Paraplegics
- Association of Dodecanese Cities and Municipalities
- Association national pour le logement des personnes handicappées (Belgium)
- The Irish Council of People with Disabilities (Ireland)

Implementing the project involved the following activities:

A. Needs analysis and creation of models and networks

- Evaluation of opportunities for employing people with disabilities in the tourist industry

- Investigation of demand for establishing a local careers information and guidance centre for people with disabilities
- Development of an e-database for disabled people
- Development of an online communications network for disabled people

B. Training activities

A vocational training course of 600 teaching units was conducted for 15 unemployed people with disabilities.

The course content was as follows:

- Methods of gathering and evaluating information (in the fields of continuing training, legislation, the labour market, independent living, privileges, etc.)
- Use of e-databases
- Methods for developing e-databases
- Methods of peer counselling practice
- Job analyses
- Analysis of occupational profiles
- Work experience

C. Activities promoting gainful employment

- Establishment of local careers information and advice centres for people with disabilities

In cooperation with the Dodecanese municipal councils and the local branches of the National Organisation of Employment Offices, centres of this kind were set up in the following towns and municipalities: the islands of Kos, Kalimnos and Leros, Rhodes City and the municipalities of Iraklides, Kalithea, Afantou and Lindos on Rhodes (Fissamber, V., 2000).

12 of the 15 disabled people who received training were employed in the information centres themselves after attending the training course. They all earn a salary commensurate with counselling occupations (Kyriasopoulou, M., 2000).

They perform the following activities:

- Evaluation, classification and entering of e-data on disabled people (related to legislation, employment, education, independent living, etc.)
- Job and job profile analyses
- Vocational orientation
- Peer counselling

Innovative elements of the project

This project introduces **peer counselling for the disabled target group** to Greece. Counselling is more efficient because the counsellors belong to the same social group as the people they advise, and were also previously unemployed.

The creation of a ***comprehensive* network of information and continuing training centres for people with disabilities at regional and local level** (five centres have sprung up on the island of Rhodes alone, which has a population of only 40,000) is very innovative for Greece.

The **cooperation of the players,** in particular the involvement of local municipal offices (including Rhodes City Council and the Association of the Cities and Municipalities of the Dodecanes) and NGOs in a project whose target group is the physically disabled, is also new for Greece.

The development of **e-databases** and an *online* communications network for disabled people, with the active participation of the disabled themselves in the design of the electronic tools, is another national first (Fissamber, V., 2000).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The project is a very successful practical model. 80% of the disabled trainees found a job on completing the course. Most of them are very satisfied with their work and working conditions. (25)

The success of this project provides an interesting example for regions with a weak tradition of initiatives for integrating people with disabilities (Kyriasopoulou, M., 2000).

The **close cooperation** between the players and organisations involved, the regional and local offices, the academic institutions (University of the Aegean), and the disabled organisations in Greece and other Member States is also a model for planning similar projects in other European areas (Fissamber, V., 2000).

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(25) After the end of the project 12 of the 15 people with disabilities found work in the advice centres which had been set up. Ten are very satisfied with their work. Although the rate of satisfaction is not really representative and can be statistically generalised only to a limited extent, it does indicate a high degree of efficiency for this approach, because of the specific problem group.

Austria

Case 1: The JOB FACTORY

Project development and objectives

Design of the JOB FACTORY project began in 1996 as a welfare and employment initiative launched by the Federal Social Welfare Office for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland. The project is sponsored by the Federal Social Welfare Office for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, the European Social Fund, the youth Labour Market Service (AMS) and the Vienna municipal authorities.

The project is noteworthy for its **preventive intervention approach** and its **specific target group**: young people who have no lower secondary school certificate (and therefore have not completed compulsory schooling) ([26]) and school leavers from special schools.

The increasingly difficult situation faced by young people in the Austrian labour market prompted the development of the concept. Due to the drop in training places young people unable to obtain lower secondary school qualifications were encountering mounting problems finding a placement. In recent years their prospects in the labour and training markets have become even more limited (Bergmann, N., 2000).

A lack of lower secondary school qualifications bars these young people from attending further education schools. Their options are restricted to apprenticeships, unskilled work and occupational therapy. Competition for training placements is tough for disadvantaged young people. Furthermore, classic apprenticeship training without special youth support programmes can result in this group being cognitively overtaxed. Without individual help and guidance young people with no lower secondary school qualifications therefore have very little chance of being able to participate in Labour Market Service (AMS) programmes (Ehart, P., 1997a).

The concept for the JOB FACTORY scheme arose as part of the welfare and employment initiative. It aims to give these young people prospects for the future, and prevent them being written off as mere 'welfare cases' at a very early age.

([26]) The proportion of compulsory-school dropouts in Austria is currently three percent. In recent years the general trend has been upwards. Experts predict a further rise in the immediate future, rather than a fall. Children from immigrant families with learning difficulties are at particular risk of dropping out of school. Given this tendency, new approaches to integrating this group, until now excluded from lifelong learning, are crucially important.

The initiative targets young people between the ages of 15 and 17 who, because of learning disabilities or stunted development, are not mature enough to cope with a job immediately after completing compulsory schooling, but who would *not achieve their full potential* in traditional approaches such as occupational therapy (Bergmann, N., 2000).

The aim of the JOB FACTORY scheme is ideally **permanent social integration**. Young people who would otherwise be marginalised should have the chance to gain a foothold in the labour market and lifelong learning (Loos, 2001a).

The project adopted an approach which offers young people the chance to **mature and acquire social skills** immediately after completing compulsory schooling. The programme is intended to **enhance transferability** between the three labour markets (private sector, labour market policy institutions and occupational therapy) (Ehart, P., 1997b).

The basic idea of the project is for young people to acquire vocational and interpersonal skills through work projects developed and conducted with their involvement. The project conception incorporated the results of a previous survey of special school leavers.

The young people are supposed to receive supervision and guidance until they are ready to enter the world of work, while gaining key skills (flexibility, reliability, responsibility, etc.). The main aim of the initiative is the subsequent integration of participants into the first labour market (in the form of apprenticeship training or unskilled work) or – if this is not possible – into the second labour market (e.g. in a qualification programme). Support on an individual basis should render specific programmes for the disabled unnecessary. **Participants acquire relevant vocational skills** through their **involvement in work projects which function like real enterprises** and which also process orders from customers as in the real world of work. The practice-oriented situation and the feeling that they are being taken seriously and fulfilling meaningful vocational tasks **motivates the young people to learn** (Volkshilfe, 1998).

Young people can choose from five occupations: catering, building renovation, cooking, communication and hotel and restaurant work. These fields incorporate a one to two-year period of work experience combined with remedial education and social and psychological counselling. (27)

The services are made available on the market. Customer orders are received in the five occupational areas, and the young people then execute them in an authentic work situation.

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(27) www.jobfabrik.volkshilfe.at

In addition, a company coordinator organises work experience placements in suitable enterprises. These placements are intended to give the young people insight into the world of work. However, they can also serve as a springboard to a permanent job or a normal training contract. A **'placement-oriented integration support scheme'** has been set up for this purpose. The plan provides placement support for positions in the private sector. It can be regarded as a **solid foundation for long-term, permanent integration in the labour market**. A successful placement is succeeded by **follow-up supervision in the young person's place of work** for a period of six months, to ensure long-term integration (Bergmann, N., 2000).

The actual job within the project is supplemented by coaching in theoretical material. The curriculum includes four to six hours per week of theoretical teaching. The lesson content is geared to the practical training and adapted to the general requirements of the trade or occupation involved. Besides conveying basic theoretical concepts, the purpose is familiarisation with the vocational school and its requirements. Special remedial education is also provided. Little by little **young people with learning difficulties thus acquire learning skills which should enable them to participate in lifelong initial and continuing training** (Loos, R., 2001a).

The JOB FACTORY was launched in September 1997, with 12 young people. By September 1998, 30 young people were benefiting from the scheme. By October 2000 this figure had risen to 41. Reaching the target groups effectively requires close cooperation between the JOB FACTORY, the Federal Social Welfare Office and the Labour Market Service (AMS). The Labour Market Service can refer young jobseekers with no immediate prospects of finding suitable employment to the JOB FACTORY.

A 1999 qualitative programme assessment revealed high satisfaction among both the young people and the subsequent employers of those who had been offered steady jobs (Obermayr/Stuppäck, 1999). The programme also boasts a high placement rate. 86% of participants had found a suitable position by the end of October 2000. This far exceeded initial expectations and the 50% target set by the Federal Social Welfare Office. The project has enabled many young people to enter the labour market, and some have even been able to embark on a regular apprenticeship (Bergmann, N., 2000).

Innovative elements of the project

One particularly innovative element is the target group. Although young Austrians in search of apprenticeships are repeatedly in the political spotlight and steps to help them have been proposed, until this point very little had been done (28) to integrate lower secondary school dropouts (dropouts from compulsory schooling (29)), least of all from a perspective of giving them a real chance for longer-term integration into the labour market and lifelong learning (Loos, R., 2001a).

In addition to the target group, the approach itself reveals significant ground-breaking aspects. **Prevention and skills teaching** make **disabled young people and those at risk of social exclusion** 'job ready' (Volkshilfe, 1998). This is a first for Austria. **Project-related learning** is another new concept that has proved successful. The consistent project-based nature of JOB FACTORY learning, which is created via accurate simulation of labour market conditions, has proved most effective. Learning in a working environment, coupled with an injection of theoretical knowledge and training of interpersonal skills, is an innovative and apparently functional element, which evaluations confirm works in practice. This combination seems to be very effective and represents a methodological breakthrough compared to projects with similar goals (Obermayr/Stuppäck, 1999).

Another important innovation is the **placement-oriented integration support scheme**, which relies on the assistance of the company coordinator. Supervision during work experience, which continues after placement, is as crucial as thoroughly preparing the young people for their first step into the real world of work (Bergmann, 2000).

A key innovative aspect of the project is its **environment, which bears a strong resemblance to the real labour market**. This continually stretches and stimulates the young people, **while offering constant social and psychological support**.

The initiative enables participants to find a foothold in the employment and/ or training system and thus facilitates their social integration. This opens the door to further training opportunities and integration into lifelong learning (Loos, R., 2001a).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

A related scientific study evaluated the project as 'very successful', particularly with regard to the high placement rate of young people on completion of the programme and the satisfaction expressed by the trainees and employers involved. The study recommends *'expanding to cover the existing demand'* (Obermayr/Stuppäck, 1999).

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(28) Der Standard, 31 October 2000.

(29) All four years of lower secondary school are an integral part of the Austrian compulsory schooling system. Lower secondary school dropouts suffer more from social and vocational exclusion than young people who abandon an apprenticeship.

The successes of these schemes indicate that integration of this target group into the first labour market is possible when the necessary support is available. However, triumphs of this kind can only be achieved with a comprehensive array of integrated projects. The special guidance and support which initiatives of this nature require make them extremely cost-intensive in the short term (set-up and start-up phase). **Longer periods of operation** are therefore desirable.

However, the (political) will must exist to support these segments of the population and foster the long-term social and labour market integration of such groups, which would not cope with conventional training measures and approaches.

The methodological approach, stressing **practice-oriented learning** supplemented by communication of interpersonal skills and theoretical knowledge teaching, is an effective concept which other projects should consider adopting (Bergmann, N., 2000).

Case 2: INITIATIVE APPRENTICE

Project development and objectives

INITIATIVE APPRENTICE assists young apprenticeship seekers in finding a suitable placement. The aims and concept of the scheme differ considerably from those of the JOB FACTORY programme. However, interesting parallels also exist.

Labour market players adopted this programme in an attempt to reduce the growing number of young Austrians vainly seeking an apprenticeship. Since the mid-1990s, the economy has been offering increasingly fewer placements. In 1997 the number of available vocational training opportunities averaged half the number of apprenticeship hopefuls. Large regional disparities complicated the bleak picture. In Vienna and Styria the situation for young people seeking vocational training was particularly acute (BMAGS, 1998 & 1999).

The project was launched in Vienna to effectively counteract this development at the behest of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions (ÖGB) and the Chamber of Workers and Salaried Employees (AK). It was implemented in 1997 and 1998 with the aim of providing suitable vocational training to young people unable to find a position on the regular training market. The most significant regional players in labour market policy (including the City of Vienna, the Labour Market Service and vocational schools) were involved in this effort.

INITIATIVE APPRENTICE can thus be seen as a **preventive programme**, whose **comprehensive approach** enables **compulsory school dropouts to obtain vocational qualifications**. This should lead to **permanent social integration**. (30)

The training workshop Jugend am Werk (Youth at Work) was contracted to implement the project. Jugend am Werk joined forces with the Labour Market Service, the Chamber of Labour, the Vienna Board of Education and vocational schools to develop the basic INITIATIVE APPRENTICE model.

The main objectives of INITIATIVE APPRENTICE can be seen as:

- offering vocational training to those who cannot find a regular apprenticeship, i.e. guaranteeing training opportunities for young people with labour market disadvantages
- placing the young people involved in a regular apprenticeship (the minimum target is that a third of all participants receive a training placement)
- allowing participants to complete vocational training while retaining the dual training system

After Jugend am Werk had developed the INITIATIVE APPRENTICE model, authorisation from the Ministry of Economic Affairs was required prior to implementation. The Ministry approved the enrolment of 300 young people in the first phase of the project, launched in December 1997. In spring 1998 another 200 participants were accepted in a second intake (Bergmann, N., 2000).

The Wiener Arbeitnehmer/innen Förderungsfonds (Vienna Worker Support Fund, WAFF), the City of Vienna and the Labour Market Service (AMS) provided the necessary funding. Initially high acquisition costs were involved, primarily for constructing and equipping the training workshops. The expenses were covered by WAFF and the City of Vienna. Ongoing expenses – training staff, administration, maintenance, living costs for the young people, etc. – are shared by the Labour Market Service and WAFF.

Programmes must feature both on-the-job practice and school-based vocational training, as do regular apprenticeships in the dual system, which is standard in Germany and Austria. However, planners have also considered that young people who have been unable to find an apprenticeship may well demonstrate a lack of academic ability, motivation and/or interpersonal skills. **Supplementary guidance and resources have therefore been incorporated** to overcome these deficits.

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(30) *'Guaranteeing young people quality training in occupations with real job prospects and placing some of the participants in regular apprenticeships were and remain the goals of Initiative Apprentice.'* Jugend am Werk, 2000.

In consultation with the Labour Market Service, various training occupations were approved for teaching within the scope of INITIATIVE APPRENTICE. These take into account both the young people's training requirements and the skills demanded by business. This should enable participants to obtain a regular apprenticeship.

INITIATIVE APPRENTICE offers a relatively wide range of training occupations.

They can be divided into two groups:

1. technical, craft-based occupations
   (e.g. mechanical engineer, mechanic, fitter, communications engineer)
2. clerks and related occupations
   (including office clerks and technical draughtspersons)

Since the programme aims to offer young people training similar to a regular apprenticeship, it was closely modelled on the standard Austrian dual training system.

Attendance at a vocational school with regular apprentices helps to create exposure to a standard apprenticeship in the classroom component of the training. Supplementary support measures ensure that lessons are assimilated and gaps in theoretical knowledge filled.

The innovative **mobile vocational training** model was developed to arrange training for *clerks and related occupations* in various enterprises. Part of the young people's practical training consisted of work placements in *several different* companies. The young people and the enterprises concerned **received individual support from itinerant trainers**, who were responsible for imparting the training content of the placement and for providing psychological guidance. Those who did not obtain work placements were offered similar training programmes at the Jugend am Werk training workshop.

Young people opting to follow a *technical, craft-based occupation* received their training in training workshops. In addition, appropriate guidance was offered to overcome possible shortcomings in the areas of interpersonal skills and motivation. So-called **jobfinders sought work placements in regular companies** to supplement the training in the workshops. This was intended to provide the young people with insight into the real world of work and (possibly) enable them to embark on a regular apprenticeship (Bergmann, N., 2000).

The programme therefore focuses on **familiarising participants** with **concrete theoretical and practical content of the training occupation. New avenues of knowledge transfer** were explored to deal with the specific situation. They are closely based on authentic practice. In addition the scheme strives to fill any learning, social and motivational deficits the young people may have, to make them **'apprenticeable'**, and provides practical support to prepare them for success in their first job.

The aim of placing the young people in regular vocational training complements this training-related aspect of the initiative. It presents a significant challenge. The placements primarily comprise periods of work experience, which trainees complete in different enterprises. **Jobfinders** negotiate work placements at the various businesses. They are also responsible for convincing companies to retain the young people as regular apprentices.

Assigning young people to the programme was the responsibility of the Labour Market Service. A prerequisite for eligibility was repeated failure to obtain a vocational training placement. The pattern of participation indicates that the young people often come from disadvantaged segments of the population. INITIATIVE APPRENTICE accommodates a disproportionate number of young Austrian citizens whose native language is not German.

A trainee placement rate of more than 50% per training year considerably surpassed the original estimate of one third. This figure applies only to those who obtained a regular training place. Other young people successfully completed the programme. Several of these opted to attend a further training establishment. The high placement rate *'vouches for the success of INITIATIVE APPRENTICE. It also indicates that this integration programme is an effective way of supporting disadvantaged young people in the long term.'* (Jugend am Werk, 2000).

An evaluative study has also demonstrated that the young people interviewed are themselves very satisfied with the initiative. They particularly appreciate the work experience. Trainees rate the practical part of the vocational training extremely highly, both in companies and in the workshops.

However, the young people are also generally satisfied with the vocational school. This is surprising considering that many young people joined INITIATIVE APPRENTICE because they had educational problems and poor learning prospects. Many had an unpromising scholastic record and a negative attitude towards learning. Intensive personal guidance from the trainers altered the young people's behaviour and instilled in them a positive attitude towards lifelong learning. INITIATIVE APPRENTICE, running in conjunction with vocational schools, has proved to be a successful and appropriate way of fostering integration (Bergmann, N., 2000).

Innovative elements of the project

The most innovative element of this project is the development of the **mobile vocational training** model. The young people complete part of their practical training in enterprises. Trainees and companies receive **individual support**

from itinerant trainers, who communicate the contents of the occupational profile and address trainees' psychological problems.

Practical relevance is the hallmark of this initiative. This is reflected in both the training content and the option of integration into a regular apprenticeship before completion of the training period. The training programme structure allows the young people to switch to a regular apprenticeship at any time. If no placement is possible, the young people can complete the programme, receiving a regular certification of qualification, and enter the labour market as skilled workers.

The role and activities of the **jobfinders** are another important innovative element. They negotiate work placements and endeavour to procure regular apprenticeships for the participants. The jobfinders act as important **interfaces** between the initiative itself, the employers and the young people.

The **preventive approach** is also new. It provides socially disadvantaged young people with appropriate training to help them avoid social marginalisation and to ensure ideally permanent integration (Bergmann, N., 2000).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

In the light of the relatively high youth unemployment rate throughout the EU, this programme model constitutes a promising preventive approach which combats the slide into social marginalisation on the one hand and ensures further training and labour market integration as far as possible on the other.

This regional initiative has very high transfer potential for countries operating the dual vocational training system (Austria, Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Switzerland). However, it must be adapted to the relevant environment before it can be transferred to other training systems (Bergmann, N., 2000).

The evaluations indicate that the young people view the programme's practical component, either in solicited partner companies or in the workshops themselves, as an integral part of the programme and a **major incentive** to continue training. The fact that the theoretical part of the training also relates to practical experience and the project sponsor provides special support ensures that even young people with poor scholastic records are able to complete the training.

Involvement of companies in the project also appears to be an important aspect, and one worthy of imitation. The jobfinders perform an important liaison function. They arrange work experience and regular trainee placements, and assess resonance regarding the practical relevance of the training. The resulting process of constant mutual feedback benefits all parties.

As well as these aspects of the scheme content, which may be of use to other projects, the *political environment* is fundamentally important. The will must exist to provide openings for **all young people** who cannot find a placement on the regular labour market. Establishing and implementing a scheme of this kind is financially draining, and returns on investment will only be realised in the long term. Furthermore, official recognition of the training requires close cooperation and agreement between the **relevant vocational training players**.

The innovation's high transfer potential and level of efficiency are demonstrated by the fact that it has been **a model for similar larger-scale projects** within Austria. The Austrian government's 1998 National Employment Plan introduced proposals for a broader scheme with a similar project concept, the **Safety Net for Young People**, as one of its aims and ultimately put it into practice. The original INITIATIVE APPRENTICE pilot project thus **continued throughout Austria** as the Safety Net for Young People.

The active participation of social partners (in this case the principal players were the Austrian employees' representatives ÖGB and AK) would be significant, even crucial, in developing and implementing similar initiatives in other European countries. The commitment of *both* social partners (employers' and employees' associations) would be advantageous (Bergmann, N., 2000).

Case 3: FLEXWORK

Project development and objectives

The FLEXWORK initiative arose as part of the Vienna Worker Support Fund (WAFF). The success of the programme has led to the establishment of an independent WAFF subsidiary, Flexwork GmbH.

WAFF was founded in 1995 at the instigation of a joint initiative of the City of Vienna, social partners (trade unions, the Chamber of Labour and the Chamber of Commerce), and the Vienna Labour Market Service (AMS). It promotes the creation of innovative integration models for the unemployed. It aims to secure jobs by broadening employees' vocational skills and to reintegrate the unemployed into working life. It actively supports specific problem groups such as low-skilled workers. WAFF has conceived and implemented a large variety of initiatives and programmes (WAFF news 1/99).

The FLEXWORK scheme targets low-skilled workers (concentrating particularly on older jobseekers). It has established a non-profit-making labour pool and offers continuing training courses during work-free periods. The project paves the way for integration into the labour market and lifelong learning.

Initially, the trade unions feared that the non-profit-making labour pool would nurture insecure working conditions. The Chamber of Commerce objected that the pool could create subsidised competition for private labour exchange companies.

However, FLEXWORK's efficient approach has demonstrated that the social partners' misgivings were unfounded. The unemployed participants acquire a steady job, and Flexwork GmbH is financed predominantly by the earnings of the pool and the regular induction allowance. FLEXWORK is eligible for this because it provides employment for people from the problem groups mentioned above.

After an initial interview, fundamentally eligible jobseekers receive a permanent contract with FLEXWORK and are assigned jobs with various companies. The ultimate aim is for the enterprises to offer workers a regular contract. If they are not given permanent employment, they are referred to another firm. FLEXWORK participants can take advantage of **continuing training, job application and motivation courses** and still receive payment during those periods when they are not working for an enterprise.

Within FLEXWORK's activity, the period when participants are not engaged in company work is particularly relevant for integration into lifelong learning. **Structuring the work-free periods to make optimal use of the further training programmes**, which are geared especially towards the groups concerned, has been a top priority since 1999. The main objective of these training and qualification programmes is to improve FLEXWORK participants' chances of acquiring a full-time contract with a company.

FLEXWORK's *Non-Profit-Making Labour Pool and Qualification* continuing training scheme has conducted 52 initiatives involving 110 participants. The skills spectrum ranged from stacker operation, welding and EDP to motivation and communication training. *Flexwork Outplacement* ([31]) was set up to train job application and interview skills and build motivation, and thus help people obtain permanent positions in the first labour market. 12 two-week training programmes were conducted for a total of 78 trainees (Flexwork, 2000a).

The experience gained from this programme formed the basis of the **Flexworkshop concept**. *'The Flexworkshop concept was developed to furnish a flexible, efficient form of training in line with the restrictions of non-profit-making labour pooling'* (WAFF news, 4/99). Guidance, motivation and continuing training between job referrals are geared to increasing chances for sustained reintegration into the labour market and hopefully preventing another round of unemployment.

([31]) Continuing training programme for Flexwork participants. It was consolidated in the Flexworkshop.

The continuing training courses, which take place mainly at external teaching institutions, are intended to help workers increase their bargaining power in the companies where they are posted, and raise the standard of work and services rendered during placements.

This should improve participants' chances of being recruited by the companies involved. To achieve this goal, strengths and weaknesses of programme participants are documented and previous placement performance analysed. This should lead to improved service and reveal participants' development potential (Bergmann, N., 2000).

FLEXWORK's Flexworkshop provides job application and communication training in the form of monitored, active job hunting ('transit training'), feedback on previous placements, strength/weakness analyses, joint drafting of plans to exploit development potential, motivation training sessions, cooperative self-qualification (group-dynamic exercises where trainees assume the role of trainers) and job-specific initial and continuing vocational training.

Since 2001 FLEXWORK participants have received initial and continuing training (or retraining) prior to their referral to a position at one of the various companies in order to increase their recruitment chances right from the beginning.

In September 2000, 360 participants were working for FLEXWORK permanently and were employed by various companies. Since then 615 previously unemployed people have found steady jobs in one of the 200-plus enterprises involved in the project through FLEXWORK, or have successfully applied to other companies by capitalising on the self-assurance and experience gained by working for FLEXWORK and receiving Flexworkshop guidance (Flexwork, 2000b).

Innovative elements of the project

The concept of non-profit-making labour pooling as implemented by FLEXWORK contains many innovative elements. The objective of integrating older and low-skilled unemployed target groups in the first labour market is achieved via a combination of different programmes. Qualification factors have played an increasingly significant role alongside the main approach – labour market (re)integration through job placement.

Work-free periods are usefully filled with various **continuing training** activities and the acquisition of vocational and social skills. However, these are always directly **practice-related** and include feedback on completed work placements, analysis of strengths and weaknesses, job application advice, development of personal skills and job-specific vocational training.

Another innovative feature is that **specific** continuing training programmes for **small groups** take priority over courses intended for all participants, which allows more flexibility in timetables and course content. This is particularly advantageous since participants in this programme have staggered phases of employment and idle periods and are therefore available at different times.

The qualification courses always stress the **close relationship** of both the method and the subject matter **to the work environment**. (32)

The **initiative's largely self-supporting structure** is another of its innovative aspects. It is financed predominantly through the proceeds of the labour pool and receives regular funding for its assistance of problem groups on the labour market. It does not put any extra strain on public institutions.

Interestingly, the programme's contents and structure focus on a comparatively *difficult* target group. It employs a range of approaches to facilitate (re)integration into the first labour market. The main emphasis is on placement in temporary work, which improves chances of finding permanent employment on the labour market. However, harnessing dormant potential and unused abilities and strengthening social and occupational skills are other vital components of the scheme which have become more and more important as the Flexwork concept has evolved.

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The project has several interesting approaches which could serve as models for other initiatives. Since it is a very broad-ranging programme, its implementation requires intensive cooperation between vocational training players and employers. The success of the project would have been impossible without the **support** of the **social partners** and the **Labour Market Service**. However, FLEXWORK's management has relatively autonomous control over the coordination and implementation of the initiative. This is certainly advantageous when prompt introduction of adaptations to the programme is necessary to better serve the target group.

The fact that FLEXWORK and the Flexworkshop focus on the needs of the individual, employing flexible coaching methods and individual problem analysis, is certainly another interesting element which other, similarly structured initiatives could well consider imitating. Targeted integration of initial and continuing vocational training elements which benefit the specific programme and consequently help to improve the quality facilitates this approach (Bergmann, N., 2000).

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(32) The e-learning approach combined with the various individual FLEXWORK projects is undoubtedly of interest to other, similar programmes which operate with flexible scheduling of qualification modules.

Denmark

Case study: Production Schools

Programme development and objectives

Denmark has established numerous production schools (*produktionsskoler*) to foster integration of unemployed young people with insufficient skills into the labour market. Production school courses usually last 12 months. However, students can leave the school at any point if they find a job or an apprenticeship. More than 5000 teenagers and young adults currently attend the 107 Danish production schools. ([33])

About one fifth of production school funding is covered by selling their services and products locally. Government subsidies furnish the remainder (Foreningen for Produktionsskoler og Produktionshojskoler, 1997).

Many production schools give students work-related training with a strong environmental emphasis. ([34]) The curriculum includes **a well-blended combination of practical training and theory** in agriculture, forestry, conservation, tourism and the textile industry. Other core subjects are media, graphics and design. Certain production schools offer courses and activities in drama, various sports and other fields. ([35])

The schools organise student exchange visits with similar institutions in Denmark and abroad. These focus on basic general knowledge, history, culture, social skills and occupational and industry-related qualifications (Loos, R., 2000b).

Innovative elements of the programme

Production schools are innovative in that their training and teaching **do not take the form of curriculum or modules.** They feature **'outlines'** tailored to participants' individual needs. **Learning by doing** is the basic concept: doing work and participating in activities. Whenever difficulties arise in a work process, task-related theory is taught in a way that aims to solve or overcome them. For instance, if calculation of wood quantities or lumber and furniture measurements poses a problem, a Mathematics lesson is given. This

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([33]) Telephone interview with Hiss, A., National Production School Coordinator. Vejle / Thessaloniki, 10 September 1999.

([34]) www.naturskolen.dk/blandet/produkt.html

([35]) www.fpp.dk

alternative approach is designed to (re)activate **participants' willingness to learn**.

This work training concept has another important innovative element: close cooperation with business. **Frequently companies help the schools select suitable projects and activities.**

Trainees learn to perform the activities and practise them until they become routine. In many cases training simultaneously imparts multimedia and language skills. Subjects taught in varying proportions at all production schools **implementing this problem-oriented learning approach** include Danish, Social Studies, Mathematics and Current Affairs. Many production school students also have the opportunity to participate in work experience at (local) public institutions or private enterprises (Loos, R., 2000a).

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

The PRODYOUTH project presented in the chapter on Spain demonstrated that the legal environment can impede or prevent implementation of production school programmes in other Member States and candidate countries. Sale of the schools' own products and services enables Danish production schools to cover some of their operating expenses themselves. However, laws in Spain and several other European countries forbid profit-making in educational institutions. (36)

Transfer of the Danish production school model to other countries could be facilitated, once the legal environment has been established, by **cooperation with local businesses** and sale of the schools' own products and services in conjunction with local businesses. This should benefit the students as well as the schools. (Loos, R., 2000b).

Local case studies:
Training and practice at selected production schools

Numerous production schools put strong emphasis on the **environment in their training and practice**. Other production schools stress **conventional and new media, graphics, textile and jewellery design** in their training and work activities. Nevertheless, they also often give due consideration to the environment in the form of *nature outlines*.

Core disciplines are old and new media, graphics and textile and jewellery design. Some production schools also offer courses and activities in drama, sports and other fields (Foreningen for Produktionsskoler og Produktionshojskoler, 1999).

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(36) Germany has similarly structured production schools for socially marginalised young people. *EU-wide harmonisation/liberalisation of legislation* in this area could make such initiatives more implementable in and transferable to other Member States.

1. Production schools with environmental training and practice

Examples of environment-oriented production schools include the School of Nature (37) in Roskilde, die School of Environment and Nature in Ringsted (38) and die Pile Mølle Production School in Ishøj. (39) A detailed discussion of the last-mentioned institution follows.

The **Pile Mølle Production School** offers four outlines: *nature and the environment*; *children and the environment*; a craft trade outline in *wood and metalworking*; and *tourism*, which focuses on transnational training and teaching opportunities.

The *nature and the environment* outline teaches routine tasks in organic gardening (cultivating vegetables and flowers) in a garden owned by the school. This track includes the theory of organic agriculture and of all horticultural issues. Principles of cultivating, harvesting and storing produce are all explored. (Loos, R., 2000b).

The *children and the environment outline* (also called '*pedagogical outline*') features a kindergarten which was planned and built to exemplify ecological precepts. Participants subsequently complete work experience in other preschool facilities. Theoretical teaching concentrates on basic ecological relationships, particularly with regard to child raising.

The tourism course involves practical training at municipal beaches. The theory covers local history and customs, dealing with tourists, and foreign languages (Foreningen for Produktionsskoler og Produktionshojskoler, 1997).

The production school's EU Centre coordinates two EU-sponsored projects and other activities. Training-related international youth exchange is a major feature of the projects (Loos, R., 2000b). (40)

2. Production schools with training and practice in old and new media, graphics, textile and jewellery design

The **Haslev Production School** offers a *workshop outline* (wood and metalworking), a *nature outline* (organic gardening / cultivating an organic garden) a *media outline* (including computer-aided graphic design, Internet), a

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(37) Some production schools that teach environmental practice and theory are also called *schools of nature*. Their learning approach and organisational structures are identical to those of the institutions that are listed as production schools.

(38) www.miljoe-naturskolen.dk

(39) www.pilem.dk

(40) Telephone interview with Gaarn-Larsen, P., Pile Mølle Production School EU Center Director. Ishøj / Thessaloniki, 10 September 1999.

theatre outline (costume-making and design), and a *cooking/food service outline*. (41)

The **Medieteknik Kobenhavn / Hejrevej Production School** features outlines teaching television broadcasting, stage, sound and radio technology, graphics, photo and data processing, and cooking. (42)

The **Kobenhavn / Ballerup Production School** augments the focuses mentioned above with jewellery design in theory and practice.

Apart from (re)motivating young people to learn and teaching social and manual skills, this school concentrates on fostering **creativity** as a further key qualification, focusing on *graphics, design, art and media* (Foreningen for Produktionsskoler og Produktionshojskoler, 1997).

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(41) www.haslevproduktionsskole.dk

(42) www.mtek.dk

Luxembourg

Case study: Formation complémentaire

Programme development and objectives

Formation complémentaire is the most significant innovative programme integrating low-skilled Luxembourgers into the labour market and lifelong learning. (43) The programme involves companies with acute staff shortages and focuses on unemployed people with no vocational training or whose qualifications no longer meet labour market requirements. *Formation complémentaire* has been targeting the low-skilled since 1996. The initiative arose from a proposal of the tripartite Commission for Labour Market and Employment Policy. NAP 1999 described it as *'made-to-measure training, retraining and redeployment for the unemployed'*.

The programme offers financial assistance in the form of subsidies and tax relief to companies with specific workforce needs that are willing to train low(er)-skilled jobseekers through a special training programme drawn up in consultation with the Labour Market Administration (ADEM) (44) and state-run continuing training institutions (CFPC). (45)

Formation complémentaire is currently the only large-scale lifelong learning integration programme for low-skilled workers. **Close cooperation between the labour market and vocational training policymakers** is a key feature of the initiative. (46)

An interinstitutional committee, consisting of representatives from the following institutions, is responsible for designing and implementing the individual aspects of the programme.

- **Labour Market Administration (Administration de l'Emploi, ADEM): one representative**
  - from the relevant ADEM employment agency (service placement)

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(43) The fledgling e-Luxembourg initiative is expected to be a strong catalyst for further innovations. The scheme incorporates a series of pilot projects to broaden participation and improve the implementation of e-learning. Plans include establishing local mulitfunctional training centres. These should also be a considerable asset to more effective integration of low-skilled workers in lifelong learning.

(44) Administration de l'emploi.

(45) Centres de Formation Professionnelle Continue.

(46) Telephone interview with Jean-Paul Reeff. J. P., Ministère de l'Education Nationale, de la Formation Professionnelle et des Sports. Luxembourg, 19 February 2001.

- from the Youth Unemployment Department (service de chômage des jeunes)
- from the Social Education Department (service socio-educatif)
- from the Equal Opportunities Department (égalité des chances)
- from the Career Orientation Department (service de l'orientation professionnelle)

one representative each from

- **Ministry of Employment (Ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi)**
- **Ministry of Economics (Ministère de l'Economie)**
- **Ministry of Education (Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle et des Sports)**

one representative from each of the three (regional) centres

- **Continuing vocational training centres (Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue - CNFPC)**

A *formation complémentaire* programme is usually instigated in cases where ADEM training courses cannot meet the skills requirements of low-skilled unemployed people.

In the planning phase, the representatives from the company involved, the Ministry of Education, (47) the vocational further training centres and the Ministry of Employment assess the feasibility of both funding and the relevant course content. The Ministry of Education's *Vocational Training* Department is responsible for drawing up the curricula and providing the necessary infrastructure and teaching staff.

The project is financed by unemployment insurance funds from the Ministry of Employment. The CNFPC generally implements training programmes.

The main role of the companies and enterprises involved is to initiate training programmes by reporting on any acute shortages, to explain their specific training focus and to guarantee every successful trainee a regular contract.

ADEM selects potential programme participants from the list of registered low-skilled jobseekers. The candidates must, however, attend an interview at the company concerned before they can be accepted on a training programme. Registered jobseekers can participate in a six-month programme once every three years. If they complete the programme successfully, they are guaranteed a regular contract with the company.

Remuneration for the duration of the *formation complémentaire* training course takes various forms. The grant is either paid in full by the labour market administration or is divided between the labour market administration and the company.

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(47) The Ministry of Education chairs the committee.

The training programmes usually run for two to six months. Particularly comprehensive training courses, however, can last up to 14 months. Courses generally follow the dual system approach, which combines in-company training with teaching in (state-run) educational institutions. Approximately 150 people participate in *formation complémentaire* programmes each year.

The **training content** and **skill objectives** of *formation complémentaire* **vary** widely, due to the heterogeneous nature of the participating companies. Courses range from a frame builder apprenticeship targeting low-skilled construction labourers to courses preparing those without training for employment in the hotel and restaurant sector (Gary, C., 2001).

Individual *formation complémentaire* programmes primarily concentrate on craft-based and industrial trades.

The following list cites some of the main occupations:

- Sandblaster, electroplater, sprayer
- House painter
- Welder
- Cable worker
- Frame technician
- Machinist
- Assistant butcher
- Graphic designer
- Warehouse worker / stock controller
- Bakery produce salesperson
- Hotel and restaurant worker
- Bus driver (48)

Formation complémentaire programmes are primarily aimed at low-skilled unemployed workers. However, jobseekers with appropriate qualifications may take advantage of training programmes for more skilled occupations. Examples include the IT course which awards successful participants the *diplôme détudes secondaires technique*, and the pharmacy assistants course.

Completion of a *formation complémentaire* training programme does not replace formal certification of the respective occupation. Nevertheless, since 1 January 2001, adults have had the opportunity of belatedly obtaining a relevant apprenticeship diploma (e.g. following on from the *formation complémentaire*). To date, however, relatively few people have taken advantage of this continuing training opportunity.

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(48) For Luxembourg's national transport authority FLAA – Fédération Luxembourgeoise des Exploitants d'Autobus et d'Autocars.

From 1997 to 1999 a total of 298 unemployed people participated in 32 different *formation complémentaire* training courses. 178 successfully completed the programme. Only 55 participants abandoned the programme or had to be removed from the scheme during the course because they subsequently proved to be unsuitable for the placement. (49)

Innovative elements of the programme

The most innovative *formation complémentaire* element is the **flexible structure**, which allows the **course content to be adapted** to the specific demands of the labour market and the companies involved.

The model's flexibility facilitates a relatively rapid response to existing skill deficits. Low-skilled workers thus have a real chance to be integrated into the labour market, ideally on a long-term basis. The concrete form of the training programmes depends on the respective environment (e.g. the severity of the low-skilled target group's education deficit, the number of candidates, which resources are required, specific local or sectoral characteristics and demands).

Another particularly innovative key element in training programmes for low-skilled workers is the close **cooperation** between **labour market players, education policymakers** and **companies** in designing programmes and **mutually determining training content and objectives**.

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

A prompt reaction to highly specialised manpower requirements and provision of tailor-made training programmes demand **close cooperation** (formal and informal) between the players (labour market administration, vocational training organs and business). (50)

Transferring this initiative to other countries or regions depends heavily on the goodwill of the participating players and their **willingness to cooperate**. Particularly in the start-up phase all parties would need to demonstrate a high level of **active commitment** to the scheme (Gary, C., 2001).

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(49) ADEM/SFP task force: Bilan d'activité pour la période du 1. 7. 1996 au 31. 12. 1998. Unpublished assessment report, Luxembourg, 1999

(50) Please note that this can probably be achieved more easily in Luxembourg than in most other EU Member States and candidate countries due to its relatively small size.

Practical study of a formation complémentaire training course: Opérateur de production

A *formation complémentaire* training programme for machine minders in synthetic material processing was conducted at a large chemical concern from May to October 1997. (51)

According to specifications, the course was designed to train people to fulfil the following tasks: adjusting and feeding machines with raw materials, processing and transporting the finished and half-finished products, performing simple adjustment and maintenance work on the machines, monitoring automatic production processes, intervening in simple disruptions to production, and assuring the smooth running of the production process (generally on an assembly-line basis).

The period of training comprised 330 hours in a vocational further training centre (CNFPC) (52) and 488 hours in the training enterprise.

The training content included the following areas:

Introduction to the company

The company presented its history, organisational structure, products, safety regulations and quality control systems. Safety training focused on instilling participants with a real understanding of ergonomics in the workplace (e.g. posture awareness). This is particularly important in automated synthetic material processing since it often involves repetitive strain on one part of the body and requires constant alertness despite monotonous assembly-line work, noise and isolated operation of machinery.

Knowledge of production processes

This included the theoretical and practical principles of mechanics, chemistry and electrical engineering and an introduction to metrology, control engineering and the interpretation of technical drawings.

This was followed by an introduction to the most important synthetic-material machine components (pumps, bearings, motors, seals, etc.), information on their function and maintenance, an overview of energy sources (the basics of steam, water, electricity, thermal power, air and nitrogen) and the fundamentals of process engineering. The participants also learned about other work-related activities such as lifting, operating vehicles such as forklift trucks and cranes, and environmental protection measures, including fire-fighting.

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(51) Telephone interview with Armand Fisch, Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue - CNFPC. Luxembourg, 27 June 2001.
Documentation and concept from CNFPC and MEN/SFP.

(52) Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue.

Complementary knowledge

Supporting programmes complemented the directly production-related skills and abilities. These fostered organisational skills such as coordination and problem-solving, teamwork, initiative, responsibility and flexibility.

The course unit *Introduction to the Company* took place in the company itself. Teaching of the *Knowledge of Production Processes* and *Complementary Knowledge* units was divided between company premises and CNFPC offices.

A total of 24 people aged 17 and over were selected for this training programme. 20 of these completed the programme successfully. The company provided jobs for the majority after training.

The project targeted young people with no vocational qualifications. They had graduated from primary school and embarked on training in an industrial or craft-based profession at a vocational school (at the level of the *lycée technique*) but had dropped out of the course prematurely (they had no CATP (53) certificate).

A brief look at the course content shows that people who are mainly required to perform repetitive tasks in their workplace are not merely trained for these tasks, but also learn skills and gain qualifications that are not direct requirements for their job.

This enables participants to **constantly improve their qualifications** and guarantees them a **wider choice of viable occupations**, promoting **increased professional mobility** (within the company and elsewhere). The ideal goal is **lasting integration in the labour market.** (54)

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(53) Certificat d'aptitude technique et professionnelle.

(54) Telephone interview with Armand Fisch, Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue – CNFPC. Luxembourg, 27 June 2001.
Documents and concepts from CNFPC and MEN/SFP.

Liechtenstein

Development potential for innovations

Liechtenstein's vocational training system has only limited scope for independent development due to its very close links with Switzerland. Both countries usually opt for vocational training reforms that leave the general structure of the system intact. The pamphlet *Vocational Education in the Principality of Liechtenstein* gives a rather general overview of several innovative proposals for the development of vocational training (which it considers promising models): *Basic Vocational Training in Teaching Blocks, Learning on the Job, Modularisation of Training Options* and *International Cooperation*.

The pressure to develop tailored training programmes for low-skilled workers and the socially disadvantaged does not seem very great in Liechtenstein. This is largely due to the high general level of education and the positive labour market statistics (Liechtenstein Vocational Training Authority, Liechtenstein Leonardo da Vinci Office, 1997).

Specific problem groups such as school dropouts, young people with no initial vocational training qualifications and the low-skilled long-term unemployed have relatively little chance to realise their potential. Large-scale educational campaigns catering for the low-skilled therefore seem unlikely. Negotiations in 1997 on offering incentives such as tax relief to companies providing training to encourage the creation of apprenticeship placements have not yet resulted in concrete initiatives because the apprenticeship shortage has eased. (55)

Examples of innovative schemes in this area include work experience, employment programmes for the long-term unemployed and initial and continuing training programmes targeted at jobseekers. We should also mention the opportunities for preliminary and initial training firmly embedded in the traditional system and the role they play in system integration (Belschan, A., 2001).

Periods of practical work experience were introduced in summer 1993. They usually last six months and are primarily targeted at unemployed apprentices. However, jobseekers with qualifications from further education institutes or upper secondary schools can take advantage of any remaining places. (56)

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(55) http://www.presseamt.li/print.asp, 7 November 2000

One example of a recent **employment programme** for the low-skilled and socially marginalised is a publicly financed work project offering people receiving unemployment benefits a temporary job for six months. Federal and local government made 15 jobs available. (57) This strategy gives people who are difficult to integrate into lifelong learning and the labour market the chance to acquire professional and interpersonal skills. Participation increases their chance of finding regular employment. (58)

The Liechtenstein Employees' Union (LANV) has stated that the priority for integrating immigrants with native languages other than German into the labour market is to provide language teaching. (59)

Unlike other European countries, Liechtenstein does not seem to be affected by the growing tendency for people with vocational qualifications to fall into the low-skilled problem group on the labour market. This is despite the remarkably high proportion of apprentices and qualified trainees in comparison with neighbouring countries. In Liechtenstein 70% of young people embark on an apprenticeship after compulsory schooling. In Austria the figure is only 40% (IBW, 1997).

Introduction of structural reform can be targeted to modernise individual occupational profiles and training courses and raise the quality. It can also lead to fundamental reform of secondary school level II, and more tertiary education. This should facilitate comparison of results at international level.

Modernising occupational profiles has become necessary mainly because traditional apprenticeships no longer fulfil the skills requirements of many small and medium-sized businesses. Thus the current focus of debate is the reform of apprenticeships as basic vocational training and their augmentation with additional qualifications.

One central innovative feature is the move to increase interchangeability between vocational and general training, between initial and continuing vocational training, and between basic and more advanced vocational training. A significant factor in this context is the fundamental reform of secondary school level II, since the course for future training is set between the ages of 14 and 16. These reforms are also important for low(er)-skilled workers, particularly with regard to raising the standard of apprenticeships.

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(56) http://www.presseamt.li/print.asp?160, 28 May 1997, and http://www.presseamt.li/print.asp?160 1 July 1998

(57) This employment project is impressive, considering the relatively low number of low-skilled and/or socially marginalised people.

(58) http://www.presseamt.li/print.asp?2075, 10 October 2000

(59) The LANV itself provides 'internal' training for employee representatives in industry and in individual sectors of the union. However, its role in educational policy debates is as important as that of the employer representatives.

Revision and institutionalisation of the 10th grade would therefore help to prepare teenagers better for the world of work before they leave compulsory schooling. This would give young people more scope to acquire and develop key skills more effectively and to gain insight into new technologies. The 10th grade could then function as an interface between school and vocational training and be a kind of preliminary vocational training period (Belschan, A., 2001).

Liechtenstein's entry into the EEA in 1995 heralded many changes. Liechtenstein has become an equal partner in the EU's education programmes and can involve itself more fully in the European educational landscape.

Liechtenstein is entitled to participate in the SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI and YOUTH IN EUROPE programmes and their subprogrammes. It can also take part in the research for the Fifth Framework Programme. (60) For the present, Liechtenstein is excluded from programmes in the ESF's area of responsibility, such as ADAPT and EQUAL. (61)

European projects and partnerships could therefore help to boost transnational **innovation in the future**. Improved dissemination and practice-oriented evaluations of project results could facilitate the implementation of innovations in Liechtenstein, as has been the case in other partner countries.

Liechtenstein's closer **involvement** (at least on a small scale) in **comparative vocational training research in Europe** would benefit the evaluation of European projects, partnerships and networks, and is therefore desirable.

Cedefop's study of VET innovations currently involves investigating a selection of Leonardo da Vinci pilot schemes with regard to their specific innovative potential to improve Europe's national VET systems. Cedefop classifies the innovations according to its own typology. (62)

Several of these Leonardo da Vinci schemes considered Liechtenstein. The EURO-BAC project (63) and its successor, EURO-BAC II, can be seen as the most innovative. (64) They are characterised by unusually high transferability and implementation potential. The projects are also significant for some lower-skilled workers. (65)

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(60) http://www.presseamt.li/print.asp?1425

(61) Administrative changes were introduced in 2000 for the second phase of the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes and the YOUTH follow-up programme. Since then LEONARDO II has been allocated according to the Vocational Training Authority's programme objectives.

(62) This approach and its application in evaluating innovations is discussed in Chapter 2.

(63) EURO-BAC stands for 'European diploma in vocational education'.

They have facilitated the development of a *European version of the Berufsmatura vocational diploma* (primarily based on the Austrian *Berufsreifeprüfung*) and have paved the way for transnational implementation (Klimmer, S., Schlögl, P., 1999).

The Austrian Ministry of Education sponsored EURO-BAC I, and EURO-BAC II is backed by the Institute for Educational Research of the Austrian Economy (IBW). Project partners in Liechtenstein are the Liechtenstein Schulamt (school authorities), the *Fachhochschulreife* preparatory courses in the *Berufsmittelschulen* and the Amt für Berufsbildung (Office for Vocational Training) (Belschan, A., 2001).

EURO-BAC I developed general standards for a **'European certificate of education'** which takes the different national environments into account.

The intention is to incorporate these standards and the corresponding materials into national education systems as far as possible (Robinigg, R., 1998).

Practical tests, implementation and evaluation of standards and materials initially only took place in Austria, Liechtenstein and Italy. In Liechtenstein the standards were introduced into German, English (66) and Mathematics teaching.

The module was tested in the *Fachhochschulreife* preparatory course. Liechtenstein developed the *German/Native Language* standard and implemented it *nationwide*. Liechtenstein's national report proposed the incorporation of an additional course module, *'Working tools and IT'*, to improve standards in the light of modern technologies. (67)

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(64) Cedefop plans to publish the assessment synthesis report in the 'CEDEFOP Panorama' series in spring 2002. It will feature a comprehensive analysis of EURO-BAC I and II. The report will also discuss an Leonardo da Vinci project on environmental management involving Liechtenstein.

(65) Low-skilled workers are defined as those who have completed an apprenticeship, *at most*. The study focus is, however, the target group segment of people whose skills are *below* those of a skilled worker. However, in principle, skilled workers can acquire a Berufsmatura (Vocational Training Diploma). Recently, increasing numbers of skilled workers have opted to take this educational route. An analysis of EURO-BAC's scope for allowing low(er) skilled workers access to lifelong learning would therefore be very useful. Since Cedefop will shortly publish a specialised discussion of selected innovative Leonardo da Vinci projects, the analysis of EURO-BAC within this study will be limited to a brief summary of the project's progress and the most important findings to date.

(66) Initially, English teaching was based on the English standard models in Vienna and Styria. Both English standard proposals posed problems. The Liechtensteiners felt that Vienna's proposal contained too many native-language elements and that Styria's was too specialised. The financial structure of apprenticeship schemes in Liechtenstein demanded restructuring of the teaching content.

Despite Liechtenstein's adaptation problems, the project was instrumental in expanding the *Fachhochschulreife* to resemble a vocational diploma (Leonardo da Vinci project EURO-BAC/Final Report, Vienna, 1999).

This pilot project is characterised by intensive transnational cooperation and the **implementation of project findings during the test phase**. Liechtenstein's players are clearly willing to cooperate actively at European level and to react flexibly towards new developments in the vocational training system.

Case study: Vocational Promotion Year

Project development and objectives

From 1996 to 1999 only approximately 30% of apprenticeships were filled by women. A two-part innovative project, Vocational Promotion Year, was launched in April 2000 to motivate teenage girls and women to embark on apprenticeships and participate in continuing training. The intention is to extend women's relatively limited occupational spectrum and to sensitise parents and teachers to occupational equality.

Women can participate in taster courses (68) in **jobs usually considered atypical for women** as well as project weeks and Vocational Promotion projects in schools, which include training in new technologies. They also attend information days organised by the careers advice service.

Innovative elements of the project

The main innovative feature of the project is its target group of young, mainly low-skilled women interested in an apprenticeship. This initiative is intended to break down gender-specific barriers in vocational training. The project constitutes an important local contribution towards the **integration of young women into vocational training processes** by **extending their practical knowledge** of vocational training opportunities.

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(67) In addition to the requirements laid down in the standard, it is compulsory to complete the final assignment on a PC. This also requires knowledge of formatting. In the 2nd and 3rd semester the module is supported by combined teaching of *German and IT*.

(68) Short-term work placement in a company (limited to several weeks). The aim is to give the young people practice-oriented experience in the relevant occupation.

Implementation and transfer potential – what can we learn from the initiative?

This initiative is very innovative for Liechtenstein itself and certainly serves as an imitable model at local and regional levels. However, the project is less transferable at European and transnational levels than the other case studies investigated within the context of this investigation (Belschan, A.,2001).

Chapter 4: Conclusions on innovative potential and implementation

1. Innovations identified

The most important innovations that have been identified are **alternative learning concepts** and **new forms of cooperation between the players**.

Alternative learning concepts, especially the various **approaches focusing on project work and motivation** (such as those practised in the Danish production schools or the JOB FACTORY), contribute significantly to a change in attitude towards learning on the part of groups usually excluded from lifelong learning. They can engender or rekindle interest and **motivation for learning** and continuing training in young people and older low-skilled workers (although programmes for the two groups need different concepts). In some cases they also help to achieve long-term integration in lifelong learning phases and cycles.

In addition to motivation for learning, these alternative approaches gradually impart **learning skills** ('learning to learn') and personality-developing and **social skills** such as communication and self-reliance.

New forms of cooperation among the different players (including authorities, social partners, educational institutions, enterprises and NGOs), and the **regional and local networks** with specific mandates have been set up especially to increase the efficiency of such cooperation. They are the second group of innovations identified in this study. Their concept can be **formal** or **informal**. The networks play a significant role in implementing innovative practices such as the above-named alternative learning concepts and in creating new learning environments. Thus they themselves represent significant innovations in the context of VET. Moreover, they are of considerable importance for the **development of new curricula** and **modules** fulfilling the current skills requirements of the labour market and industry and **innovative models of finance** for the implementation of programmes (e.g. the FLEXWORK and PRODYOUTH projects, *formation complémentaire*).

New regional and local networks and partnerships also form the basis of successful initiatives for integrating groups in **isolated rural areas** with little access to lifelong learning. Some of the case studies have shown how new forms of cooperation among the players and new, efficient local network structures facilitate the integration of specific target group segments among the low-skilled in economically underdeveloped rural regions of Spain and isolated local areas on Greek islands.

New forms of support for jobseekers (especially *jobfinders* and placement-oriented integration support scheme) and **career choices** (JOVEM project) are also important innovations.

Another innovative feature is the application of certain initiatives and procedures to **specific target group segments** among the low-skilled who have little access to lifelong learning. These may be compulsory education dropouts, special school leavers and other young people with learning difficulties, older unemployed people and the physically disabled. The low-skilled unemployed in economically underdeveloped rural and isolated regions mentioned above also belong in this group. Low-skilled and socially excluded women were given particular attention in this context.

In ***Spain,*** the **project and motivation-oriented learning concept** of the *taller de empleo* and the application of this approach to the **target group** of low-skilled, unemployed **over-25s** are significant innovations. Until now this group has had no opportunity to participate in this type of programme. Participants are employed by the institution implementing the scheme for the duration of the *taller de empleo*, and receive the standard wages for normal employees in the corresponding sector.

The PRODYOUTH project is novel in its structure – the production school, in which **school and enterprise are linked to form a new, constructive model –** and in its original form of imparting knowledge and occupational skills. A **motivation-oriented learning concept** encourages young people to **learn and to perform skills-based work**.

The JOVEM project is the first to integrate supplementary units of learning into the regular lower-secondary level of compulsory education, thereby giving young people with learning difficulties who would otherwise be vulnerable to social marginalisation a concrete idea of the world of work and the sort of activities various occupations might entail. The aim is to (re)motivate young people to continue with their general education and vocational training, and to encourage self-reliance. This should help them understand the value of lifelong learning and motivate them to participate in it. The integration of alternative learning approaches (for example the module for acquiring motivation) into the conventional school learning environment transforms the school into a multifunctional learning zone which fulfils the holistic demands of lifelong learning.

In ***Greece***, the *Local Social Capital in Archanes* project is distinctive among the projects supported by the European Social Fund in that it has established an **organisational model** and **network** at **local** and **regional level** which provides the funding and active guidance in an advisory capacity for more than a hundred local micro-projects promoting social integration for low-skilled workers. The project is also unique among ESF projects with regard to the **target group segments** it supports. These are low-skilled workers of various age groups in rural and isolated areas such as mountain villages. Promoting **social cohesion** at **local level** by supporting integration measures **substantially involving voluntary work** in a **rural area** is also innovative for EU programmes.

The chief innovative feature of the *Employment through Promotion of Independent Life* project is the unprecedented introduction in Greece of peer counselling for people with disabilities. The establishment of a network of information and guidance centres for people with disabilities at regional and local level is also a first for Greece. The development of e-databases for people with disabilities, with the active involvement of disabled people in designing the electronic tools, is also new in the national context.

This project *combining continuing training with employment incentives* represents Greece's first attempt to link continuing training measures for low-skilled workers directly with employment. The close **cooperation between the public institutions responsible and the companies** is a model for other initiatives in this area. The scheme motivates enterprises to recruit new employees by creating a favourable environment.

In ***Austria,*** a key new aspect of the JOB FACTORY project is the specific target group. Until now hardly any initiatives focused on the integration of dropouts from compulsory education. Learning on the job, coupled with an injection of theoretical knowledge and the acquisition of social skills, is intended to ensure long-term integration into the labour market and lifelong learning as far as possible. Another highly innovative feature is the placement-oriented support scheme accomplished by the employing-company coordinator.

Mobile Vocational Training is the most important innovation of INITIATIVE APPRENTICE. Young people complete part of their practical training in companies. Trainees and companies receive **personal support from itinerant trainers**, who teach the training content and also offer psychological support. The function and activities of the **jobfinders** are also a radical new element of this project. Jobfinders organise work placements and establish young people in regular apprenticeships. They function as important interfaces between the programme, the companies and the young people.

The FLEXWORK initiative with its non-profit-making labour pool breaks new ground by using **periods of unemployment for continuing training activities**. It concentrates on the development of **social competence** alongside the acquisition of occupational skills. Participants learn to give feedback on previous placements, analyse their strengths and weaknesses in employment, practise applying for jobs and complete personality training. The form of funding and self-financing of the initiative can also be regarded as innovative. It is mainly financed by income generated from the labour pool and the standard subsidisation for problem groups in the labour market. There is no additional burden on public institutions.

In ***Denmark,*** the original feature of the production school training concept is that training and lessons **do not take the form of a fixed curriculum or modules**, but of ***outlines***, in which the training is tailored to pupils' individual needs. The basic concept is that **skills are acquired and activities learned by doing**. Theoretical lessons directly relating to the task in hand are given as and when difficulties arise in a way that aims to solve or overcome the problems. This **alternative approach to learning** is intended to kindle, or rekindle, young people's **motivation to learn** and help them **acquire social skills.**

The programme offers a **combination of practical training and theoretical lessons** in agriculture and forestry, conservation, tourism and textiles. Other core subject areas are old and new media, graphics, and textile and jewellery design.

Close cooperation with industry is a further innovative focus of this training and work concept. The areas of **work and activity are often chosen in collaboration with the company**. Trainees learn to perform the activities and practise them until they become routine. In many cases this training is combined with instruction in multimedia studies and languages.

The innovative aspect of *formation complémentaire* in **Luxembourg** is its **flexible design**, which facilitates the **adaptation of training content to the specific requirements of a particular enterprise**. The close cooperation between labour-market policymakers and enterprises in designing the scheme and the **joint decisions on training content and objectives** represent a major new direction in relation to the low-skilled target group. The continuing training course *opérateur de production* is a pioneering and efficient case example of a *formation complémentaire* programme for integrating low-skilled workers into occupationally relevant learning processes.

Liechtenstein offers new VET and integrative measures in the form of various on-the-job training opportunities, work schemes for the long-term unemployed and initial and continuing training courses aimed directly at jobseekers. However, their transnational innovative potential is lower than in the case studies from other countries.

The two-part project *Berufsimpulsjahr* (Vocational Promotion Year) merits attention. It started in April 2000 with the aim of motivating (low-skilled) young women and girls to complete initial and continuing training. Information events organised by the careers guidance office are supplemented by 'taster courses' **in occupations and training women do not usually consider** and project weeks and *Vocational Promotion projects* in schools. (69) The main innovative feature of the scheme is its **target group**: young, mainly low-skilled women who are interested in an apprenticeship. The object of the initiative is to break down gender barriers in vocational education. The project is an important local contribution to **integrating young women in vocational learning processes** by expanding their practical knowledge of VET opportunities.

2. Transfer and implementation

Use of alternative teaching and learning formats to implement vocational training programmes for low-skilled workers should increase. Besides imparting knowledge and skills, the focus must lie on **sustained motivation for learning** to ensure optimal **long-term integration** into lifelong learning and the labour market.

Project-oriented learning and working in small groups are ideal for this purpose. The content must, however, be adapted to the skills of the participants. A purely project-oriented approach, such as that used in the ***Danish production schools***, has often proved an efficient way to target low-skilled people.

Innovative projects should be planned and designed for the **longer term,** especially for the low-skilled target group. Many initiatives do not reach their full potential until a certain period of time has elapsed.

For low-skilled people who have not yet found work or who are no longer in employment, a **combination of job-based and skills-based elements** has proved particularly promising. Practical experience greatly helps to motivate young people in particular for the theoretical aspects of the training - with the aid of intensive and, ideally, individual support.

When transferring and implementing innovative practices in other regions and countries, their **broad socio-economic, legal and VET structures must be assessed for compatibility**. Where they are not compatible, the approach in question must be adapted to the new environment. This often proves difficult and can hamper the transfer of innovations.

The **content and organisation** of innovative projects should therefore be flexible enough to facilitate adaptation to a new environment on transferral.

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(69) Temporary employment (usually for several weeks) in a company. The objective is to familiarise young people with a particular occupation or branch. The 'taster courses' themselves are not innovative. The novel aspect is that they *specifically target* apprenticeships not usually considered by girls and women, and are combined with specific measures aimed at improving understanding of these occupations and their career potential for the members of the target group.

Even this cannot always guarantee successful implementation, but does certainly make it easier.

Spain's PRODYOUTH project has demonstrated how legal restrictions can hinder or prevent implementation. Production schools can cover part of their expenses themselves by selling products and services. In Spain, however, schools are prohibited by law from making a profit.

If the appropriate legislation were in place, the *Danish production school* model could be transferred to other countries. Close cooperation with local enterprises and sale of products and services at the greatest possible profit to the school and the young people would facilitate transfer.

The JOVEM project also has high transfer potential. Work is in progress to implement this approach in other regions of Spain (Catalonia and Navarra) because the project has demonstrated such a high degree of efficiency in motivating secondary-school pupils with learning difficulties, who are vulnerable to marginalisation.

The ***Greek*** *Local Social Capital in Archanes* project is one of the EU's LSC initiatives and part of other programmes for European projects, partnerships and networks, as well as the education strategies and policies of the regional authorities. It is suitable for transfer to regions in other Member States and candidate countries. This initiative is an exemplary innovation for the EU. The transfer to and implementation of this model in other regions of Europe could contribute significantly to the **long-term integration of marginalised groups** into **lifelong learning processes** and **cycles** and the **labour market**.

The ***Austrian*** JOB FACTORY project lends itself to application in other regions and Member States. It represents a novel and relatively easily transferable approach (broadly independent of the Austrian dual system of training) to ideally permanent integration of low-skilled young people with learning difficulties into lifelong learning processes and cycles and the labour market. Under the right conditions, this model could also be implemented in a vocational training centre outside the dual training system and could contribute substantially to the long-term integration of the problem group of low-skilled young people. The only obstacle to the transfer of this approach and its implementation in the training centres of other countries and regions might be funding. The relatively large number of personal tutors engenders correspondingly high staff costs.

INITIATIVE APPRENTICE can easily be transferred to other European dual vocational training systems (Germany, Denmark, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein). This project will require more adaptation than JOB FACTORY before it is suitable for countries with other training structures. Within Austria it has inspired another, broader-based but similar initiative: the national *Safety Net for Young People*.

Formation complémentaire, the innovation identified in **Luxembourg,** is also an example for other Member States. Again, EU candidate countries could benefit from this model. In particular, the close and active cooperation of all labour market and VET players in both the content design and the organisation and funding of the scheme is exemplary. Transfer to and implementation in other countries and regions largely depends on the goodwill and **active cooperation of the players involved**. This needs an informal dimension as well as the formal one.

Vocational Promotion Year, the **Liechtenstein** innovation for low-skilled young women, is a model at local and regional levels, although its transnational and European potential is lower than that of the other case studies. Regions in southern European Member States and candidate countries from eastern Europe, in particular, could use this efficient approach as a basis for similar initiatives. Modifications to the framework and structures of the relevant VET system would be necessary, however, as this initiative was developed in the context of Liechtenstein's dual training system (although not as an integral component of it).

The transfer of innovative practices developed through European projects, partnerships and networks can contribute substantially to improving skills among workers in the Member States. Due to the relative inefficiency of dissemination strategies, it is quite common for modules and learning aids developed through European projects to reveal great potential for boosting the efficiency of initial or continuing training in specific occupations or occupational groups, yet not to be implemented in VET.

The commitment of the social partners and all other VET and labour market players to disseminating approaches developed through European project partnerships and networks can improve implementation and application of these innovative procedures in VET, but this commitment must be fostered by project organisers. Trade unions and employers' associations for the relevant sector or group of occupations should be approached and actively involved in the dissemination strategy. Larger project budgets and a recognised certificate of success for efficient dissemination strategy and implementation could open up new perspectives for broadening the application of project results.

The projects for the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market described in this article are good examples of the commitment of various VET players and institutions to project management and the dissemination of results. They can therefore serve as models for similar initiatives.

Tabular summary of the case studies

Table 1: Spain

	Taller de Empleo	**Prodyouth**	**Jovem**
Project / programme objective	Employment and initial and continuing training programme for middle-aged and older, low-skilled jobseekers designed to lead to (ideally) permanent integration of the target group into lifelong learning and the labour market.	Socially marginalised young people or those at risk of social exclusion receive training in a simulated company.	Preventative scheme for young people still involved in compulsory schooling, but who are in danger of dropping out of school, employment and society.
Innovative elements	This is the first time that Spain has targeted a scheme of this type at low-skilled over-25s. Project-oriented learning and working. Individual guidance from tutors.	This is the first time a Danish production school model has been implemented in Spain. The most important innovation is the combination of practice-oriented theoretical teaching and specific work processes by means of an alternative work-oriented learning concept. Participants learn practical skills and background theory and are (re)motivated to learn.	Incorporation of a complementary training programme into the regular training system for those with learning difficulties and all those threatened with social marginalisation. Teaching of social skills and learning motivation in comprehensive training modules. Transformation of the conventional school learning environment into a multifunctional learning zone.

	Taller de Empleo	**Prodyouth**	**Jovem**
Implementation and transfer potential	The programme is a prime example of practice-oriented qualification of older unemployed workers and motivating participants to learn. However, to ensure permanent integration into the labour market and lifelong learning, further steps are necessary.	The production school model is ideal for integrating marginalised young people into the labour market and working life (either as employees or in self-employment in the small business sector), and lifelong learning. However, Spanish legislation stands in the way of permanent implementation of initiatives of this kind. This prohibits schools from participating in profit-making activities.	This approach has high transfer potential. It is well suited for transfer to other parts of Spain. The effectiveness of this initiative for the group it targets has led to the current implementation of the model in Catalonia and Navarra.

Table 2: Greece

Project objective	**Local Social Capital in Archanes** **(European Union LSC project)**
	The project is designed to facilitate access to employment for low-skilled, socially marginalised workers, or those at risk of social exclusion. It supports members of this target group and organisations which undertake voluntary work to promote the integration of the low-skilled.
Innovative elements	The initiative targets a group which has been neglected by European Union LSC projects until now: low-skilled workers in rural and isolated areas. Another first for Greece and for all other EU LSC projects is the creation of an organisational structure and network at regional and local level to optimise implementation of project objectives. The intensive guidance which personal mentors give to project participants is a key innovative element. This surpasses the level of advice which LSC projects normally provide. *Informal* skills teaching in occupation-related areas through *mentoring*. Many of the individual projects also feature *formal, group-specific* continuing training measures (e.g. specific *e-learning* modules for those with learning difficulties).
Implementation and transfer potential	Transfer of this concept to the mainstream ESF programmes for other regions (in Greece and in other Member States and candidate countries) would be advisable, as this initiative is a model for other schemes fostering the integration of socially marginalised low-qualified workers in rural and isolated areas.

Programme objective	**Combining continuing training and promoting employment** **(Programme from the ESF *Operational Plan* Continuing vocational training and promoting employment 1994-99)**
	The direct employment effects of continuing training measures for the lower qualified unemployed should be increased. Unemployed workers complete a training course which is as practice-oriented as possible and complies with the specific skills requirements of the enterprise. The enterprises pledge to take on a number of the trainees for a certain period at their own expense when the course is over.
Innovative elements	This is the first time that interested companies have had a significant say in the content of continuing training courses for the unemployed. Another novelty is company involvement in selecting course participants.
Implementation and transfer potential	The high efficiency of this initiative has already led to the implementation of other, similarly structured continuing training programmes in Greece.

Project objective	**Employment through Promotion of Independent Life (E.P.I.L.- Project / EMPLOYMENT - HORIZON Initiative)**
	People with disabilities receive help to find a job, lead an independent life and become active members of their local community. A network was formed in cooperation with numerous players from this field and a range of information and advice centres for the disabled were established to implement this project. The project also trained people with disabilities to be counsellors for the disabled.
Innovative elements	The project represents the first *peer counselling* for the physically disabled in Greece. Disabled people who successfully completed the training course (which was provided as part of the project) subsequently acquired jobs as counsellors at one of the information centres. Creation of a *comprehensive* network of *regional* and *local* information and continuing training centres for the disabled is also a significant development. This covers several Greek islands and island groups (five centres have sprung up on the island of Rhodes alone). The development of e-databases for people with disabilities, with the active involvement of disabled people themselves in designing the electronic tools, is another national first.
Implementation and transfer potential	This very effective concept for the vocational and social integration of disabled people has high transfer potential as long as funding is assured.

Table 3: Austria

Project objective	**Job Factory** **Preventive programme which aims to facilitate labour and training market integration of young people who have failed to complete compulsory schooling.**
Innovative elements	The most important innovative feature of this initiative is its target group of compulsory school dropouts and special-school leavers, who until now had been largely neglected by vocational training and labour market policies. Another important innovation is the preventive approach intended to protect young people from social marginalisation and its consequences. The integrative and efficient combination of practice-oriented training and in-company work constitutes a new methodological approach. The fact that participants on project-oriented placements receive *constant personal supervision* and develop *learning skills* step by step is particularly interesting. *The function of the placement-oriented integration support scheme*, particularly in its coordinating and acquisitional role between the programme and businesses.
Implementation and transfer potential	This approach, involving skills learning and work experience, facilitates the successful integration of problem groups such as those with learning difficulties into the labour market and lifelong learning. However, the project requires close cooperation between vocational training and labour market policymakers, since these programmes are fairly cost-intensive, particularly in the start-up phase.

Project objective	**Initiative Apprentice** Provision of an accepted certified qualification for (primarily disadvantaged) young people who fail to obtain a placement on the normal vocational training market.
Innovative elements	Another innovative feature of this preventive approach is facilitating acquisition of an accepted qualification by combining various *alternative vocational training paths* while *maintaining* the current dual training system. Cooperation with companies and 'jobfinders' who liaise between the programme and businesses. The concept of 'mobile training', under which participants gain work experience in different enterprises under the active supervision of the programme provider.
Implementation and transfer potential	Wide-ranging involvement of policymakers, in particular social partners, is very important for transfer and implementation, as official recognition of qualifications is crucial. These institutions must therefore be prepared to cooperate closely and provide financial support. This pilot scheme has very high transfer potential, particularly to countries with dual training systems (Germany, Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Liechtenstein, Switzerland). The programme has been a model for other, similar, larger-scale initiatives within Austria, e.g. the national *Safety Net for Young People*.

Project objective	**Flexwork** **An active labour market policy employing non-profit-making labour pooling with comprehensive training components. It was mainly designed to help the problem group of low-skilled workers integrate into the labour market.**
Innovative elements	The main innovative feature is the combination of *employment* and *skills learning*. The programme's structure allows a flexible and innovative approach to skills teaching. Participants use their work-free periods for continuing training. This is tailored to individual needs and specific job experience. Flexwork participants learn social competence and skills relevant to their occupation to help them gain a permanent contract with one of the companies offering placements as soon as possible. Labour market integration through familiarisation with actual working conditions is given priority, but idle periods between placements are used to upgrade qualifications. The programme tests and applies very flexible training concepts and makes considerable use of e-learning. Relevance to the 'real world of work' is also a central theme of the programme. The project is predominantly self-financing (through the earnings of its labour pool and its regular induction allowance). This is a novel approach for this target group.
Implementation and transfer potential	Transfer and large-scale implementation would require close cooperation between the relevant players. This is particularly important given the relatively large scale of the initiative. Nevertheless, programme organisers must be free to act autonomously to facilitate rapid development of the concept and permit adaptation to new conditions.

Table 4: Denmark

Programme objective	**Production schools** Social integration of young *dropouts*. The training concept chiefly targets learning motivation and the integration of low-qualified young people into the labour market and lifelong learning. Core subjects of the production schools' work-oriented approach include the environment, tourism, media, graphics and design.
Innovative elements	The main innovation is the alternative learning concept which is intended to (re)activate learning motivation. Training and teaching are not a set curriculum or modules, but *outlines* tailored to participants' individual needs. Effective combination of application-oriented theory and practical work: the focus is on learning by doing. Whenever difficulties arise in a work process, theory directly relating to the task in hand is provided to solve or overcome the problems. Close adaptation of work and training content to company requirements. Profit-making conception of production schools, which allows them to be partially self-financing. Students sell their products and market the services they can provide locally.
Implementation and transfer potential	Creation of a legal environment which allows schools to engage in profit-making activities and cooperation between production schools and local enterprises has significantly facilitated transfer of the Danish production school model to other countries.

Table 5: Luxembourg

Project objective	**Formation complémentaire** Integration of low-skilled unemployed people with no vocational training or whose qualifications no longer meet labour market requirements through practice-oriented continuing training programmes.
Innovative elements	The main innovative feature is the active involvement of all relevant labour market players. The Labour Market Administration, the Ministry of Employment and Economics, the Ministry of Education, state-run continuing training centres and businesses jointly design and implement the programmes. Companies with acute staff shortages initiate training programmes when the supply of jobseekers registered with the Labour Market Administration is not sufficient to meet demand. They pledge to offer participants a regular contract if they successfully complete the (dual) skills training programmes. Another novel feature is the way the project is designed to respond to demand. Each *formation complémentaire* programme is structured according to specific requirements. The involvement of many different institutions and interest groups (e.g. in structuring programme content) guarantees lasting job relevance.
Implementation and transfer potential	Prompt reaction to highly specialised manpower requirements and provision of tailored training programmes demands close (and informal) cooperation between the players. Transferring this initiative to other countries or regions depends largely on the goodwill of the players.

Table 6: Liechtenstein

Project objective	**Vocational Promotion Year** **The programme aims to introduce low-skilled teenage girls to training occupations not usually considered by women. The participants are given the opportunity to work for a short time in companies and learn more about the relevant training occupation.**
Innovative elements	The main innovative feature is the target group of teenage girls interested in an apprenticeship. Extending the job prospects of women and girls who have little or no interest in further education. Breaking down gender-specific barriers in vocational training. Motivating girls to train in occupations not usually considered by women. Contributing towards integrating (usually low-skilled) young women in occupational learning cycles and training processes.
Implementation and transfer potential	Innovation at local and regional level. It is a first for Liechtenstein itself and could certainly serve as a model for other localities. However, transfer potential is lower than in the other case studies.

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List of abbreviations

Greece

OAED	Organismos Apascholisis Ergatikou Dinamikou (National employment organisation)
OATEP	Organismos Anaptixis Temenous Pediadas (Organisation for the Development of the Temenos Pediada Region)
OP	Operational Programmes

Austria

AK	Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte (Chamber of Workers and Salaried Employees)
AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice (Labour Market Service)
IBW	Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft (Institute for Research on Qualification and Training of the Economy)
ÖGB	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund (Austrian Trade Union Federation)
ÖIBF	Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung (Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training)
WAFF	Wiener Arbeitnehmer/innen Förderungsfonds (Vienna Worker Support Fund)

Luxembourg

ADEM	Administration de l'Emploi (Labour Market Administration)
CFPC	Centres de Formation Professionelle Continue (Centres for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training)
CNFPC	Centre National de la Formation Professionnelle Continue (National Centre for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training)

Liechtenstein

LANV	Liechtenstein employees' union

European initiatives	
ESF	European Social Fund
EURO-BAC	European vocational training diploma
Leonardo da Vinci	Leonardo da Vinci programme
LSC	Local Social Capital

Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training)

Innovations for the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market

Case studies from six European countries

Roland Loos

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The identification and analysis of innovative approaches and practices for the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market represents an important challenge from the perspective of employment, social and educational policies because of this group's numerous different disadvantages.

Cedefop assisted the European Commission in the analysis and dissemination of innovative vocational training practices in Europe by including in its 2000 work programme the projects 'Observation of Innovations in Vocational Training' and 'Lower skilled Workers'. Cedefop continued this work in 2001 with the project 'Identifying and Analysing Innovations and Best Practices'. The study focuses on a selection of exemplary regional and national initiatives and European projects and partnerships with considerable innovation potential.

This synthesis report presents innovative vocational training initiatives to improve the integration of low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market. It includes an analysis of their transferability to other regions and states, as well as to the EU as a whole.

This publication is intended to help policy-makers at European, national and regional levels to implement innovative vocational training programmes by providing the latest subject-specific information and recommendations for their implementation. The text is also designed to furnish vocational training researchers in this area with up-to-date findings to stimulate their scientific research on measures to improve the integration of low-skilled workers into European labour markets and lifelong learning

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